

# A BRIEF SURVEY OF WORLD HISTORY

VOL. I

THE ANCIENT AND MIDDLE AGES

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With a foreword by

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## PREFACE

This is not a work of research or a treatise which can claim to be based on original authorities. It is a compilation presenting in a continuous narrative an introductory survey of the major historical events from the earliest times to the end of the First World War. A knowledge of such events is not only a recognised part of what we call education but is of added interest and concern to everyone in these critical times when the world is rushing post-haste into a future about which it is difficult to prophesy.

The present work has been written to meet the special requirements of students and general readers of our country. Due importance has been given to the history of Asia and the East, which has been neglected too much and too long in similar manuals. Also, attempts have been made to render the book attractive, teachable and easily intelligible. Difficult metaphors, and obscure allusions to Greek and Roman mythologies and Biblical passages, which often stand as obstacles to the proper understanding of the subject matter, have been carefully avoided.

In a work of such small compass the author inevitably had to select and omit from an immense range of facts. He has, wisely or otherwise, given little attention to the social and cultural evolution of mankind, not because it is less important than political events but because a review of political history is a preliminary and most convenient framework for the proper study and assessment of human progress correctly in time and space. A number of cartoons, maps and illustrations have been inserted to visualize the subject matter of the text.



The author takes this opportunity to express his sincere thanks to Dr. P. C. Chakraborty, M.A., Ph.D., Head of the Department of International Relations, University of Dacca, for giving him the benefit of his special knowledge of the subject in the writing of the book. An immense debt of gratitude is owed to Mr. Santosh Kumar Bhattacharjee, M.A., Lecturer in History, University of Dacca, who read the manuscript, made creative criticisms and offered many valuable suggestions. The author is indebted to Dr. A. Halim, M.A., Ph.D., Head of the Department of History, University of Dacca, who took a generous interest in the enterprise and was pleased to write a Foreword. But none of them are responsible for the errors which remain or for the expression of any opinion which may be found in these pages.

For preparing the manuscript for the press and various clerical help the author is indebted to his two daughters, Neelima and Mira and his two nieces, Shanti and Gouri. But for their patience and industry it would be impossible for him to cope with the task.

Messrs. Orient Longmans Ltd., the publishers of the book, deserve special thanks for that genuine spirit of co-operation and courtesy which mean so much to an author.

Suggestions for the improvement of the book will be thankfully accepted.

Ramna, Dacca,  
September 23, 1949.

THE AUTHOR.

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## FOREWORD

While reading the manuscript of Mr. Ray's "A Brief Survey of World History", I was pleased to find that the general plan and arrangement of the topics have been made in such a way as will meet the special requirements of students as well as satisfy the interest of general readers who want to be acquainted with an "outline" of world history. There is, of course, no dearth of textbooks on world history. But most of them are concerned with the affairs of Western Europe giving a cursory glance at the history of the Near East. They often omit the growth and development of the wonderful civilizations of China, India, Persia and Arabia, and the great historical upheavals of Central Asia which influenced international relations for several hundred years before the modern period. I am of opinion that Mr. Ray's book is an initial, though short and necessarily incomplete, attempt to stimulate the interest of its readers to see historical events in a new and wider perspective than has been customary with most of similar publications.

As the author has said, the facts of the book have been gathered from various sources; but I find them combined in a unity of thought and as a useful basis for more detailed studies.

University Buildings  
Ramna.

A. HALIMI.



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## CHAPTER I

### BEFORE HISTORY BEGAN

History, in its more usual though rather narrower sense, is the story of the growth and decay of civilization and institutional life of man. Strictly speaking this 'story' begins with the keeping of written records of events. But the earliest written record intelligible to us is a thing of yesterday only, compared with the vast period of time during which man has been occupying the earth. According to a recent estimate, man, in a recognizably human form, is more than half a million years old, but written records of his doings date from about nine thousand years ago. The *Historic Age* begins from this period. The long preceding period down to about 7000 B.C. is called *Prehistoric*.

For want of written records we can have no continuous and orderly narrative of the story of prehistoric man. But there are at least two ways which have enabled us to know something about him. In the first place, if we study the occupations and customs of the backward races such as the extinct Tasmanians of a century ago or of the present-day primitives such as the Veddas of Ceylon and the natives of New Guinea and Borneo, we can gain an insight into life as it must have been in pre-historic times. Secondly, by working on the remains of skeletons, tools, weapons, and other evidences of primitive life which have been discovered, it has been possible to piece together, in dim outline, an account of the beginning of human history. In that account dates are entirely a matter of estimate and names are altogether absent. It only makes out certain stages by which primitive man progressed towards civilization, giving



some evidence of his physical types and mental development but little knowledge of his social life and no knowledge of his language. It was, however, during this period that man made some of the major achievements on which modern civilization rests, e.g., the discovery how to kindle and use fire, the domestication of animals, the establishment of agriculture, development of intelligible speech, knowledge of arts and industry, expressions of religious beliefs, the observance of customs, and the organization of social and political groups. Hence, a brief survey of pre-history is not only an interesting but a necessary introduction to any account of the recorded history of man.

### PALAEOLITHIC AGE

The pre-historic times since the appearance of men on the earth have usually been divided into three periods according to the character of materials used for weapons and tools. These periods are: the *Palaeolithic* or Old Stone Age, the *Neolithic* or New Stone Age, and the *Age of Metals*.

The weapons and tools of the earliest Palaeolithic Age were flints or stones found in nature. The early men or quasi-human beings picked up such stones, used them once and flung them away, just as a gorilla or chimpanzee would act to-day for the purpose of breaking a shell or cracking a nut. Skulls and bones of those first men have been found in widely separated regions of the world. One of the oldest of such finds comes from Trinil in the island of Java. It consists of a skull cap, two molar teeth and a left thigh bone. These remains have been described as representing a type of man-like creature called *Pithecanthropus erectus*, the 'erect ape-man', who lived at a time not later than four or five hundred thousand years ago.



FIG. 1. THREE EXINCT TYPES OF EARLY MEN

The one on the left, whose skull was found in Java, is the earliest type, called *Pithecanthropus erectus*, meaning an apeman who had learned to walk upright. The second is called Neanderthal man, from the name of the region where parts of his skeleton were found. The third is called Cro-Magnon, from the name of the cave in France where bones of this type of early man were found.

Whether the Java-man was the direct ancestor of man or whether he along with other man-like apes such as the chimpanzee, the gorilla and the orangutang, sprang from an as-yet-unknown common ancestor remains still a mystery. But there can be little doubt that the Java-man was a wild hairy chinless individual, with low forehead, much like animals in his mode of living, hunting wild animals and being hunted by them. By his erect position—as the long thigh bone indicates—he was well equipped for long migrations throughout the globe.

Between the Java-man and the modern man stand several 'tentative' human species represented by types known as Heidelberg Man, Neanderthal Man, Cro-Magnon Man and Grimaldi Man. They are so-called from the names of the regions where parts of their skeletons were first found. The Heidelberg Man (so called from the find at Heidelberg in Germany) might have been living in Europe about two hundred thousand years ago. He was perhaps followed by the Neanderthaler whose bones were dug out at Neanderthal near Dusseldorf (Germany). Like the Java-man and the Heidelberg man, the Neanderthaler might have been hairy and uncouth in appearance, but from the structure of his jaw-bone the scientists infer that he must have been capable of speech. Other human fossils as old as or older than, those of Neanderthaler, were found at Piltdown in England, at Broken Hill in Rhodesia (South Africa) and near Peking in China. The last type closely resembles the Java-man with whom he is believed to have been contemporaneous. The Peking man had a culture very strikingly marked by the use of fire.

The Neanderthaler inhabited Europe and Asia for a very long time, perhaps many thousands of years. From geologic evidence it is supposed that this type disappeared at least in Western Europe between 20,000 and 25,000 B.C.

and was replaced by the Cro-Magnon and the Grimaldi, who were indisputably real human beings. The remains of the Cro-Magnon type were first found in the Cro-Magnon cave and those of the Grimaldi were found in the cave of Grimaldi, both in France. The Cro-Magnards were tall and big-brained with broad faces and prominent noses resembling to some extent the North American Indians. The Grimaldi men of whom we know very little seem to have been Negroid, having affinities with the Bushmen and Hottentots of South Africa. The original homes of both these types were perhaps in South Asia or North Africa. They might have lived at the same time and belonged to what is known as the later Palaeolithic Age.

If we go from the oldest to the more recent of the types of Palaeolithic men we find that there have been progressive changes in anatomical structure, that have combined to produce modern men—arms shorter, posture erect, brow and chin larger, and the brain case enlarged and showing higher mental powers. In the course of time men's superior brain and adaptable hands enabled them to acquire a measure of control over their environments. By the end of the Old Stone Age men became great hunters who, with their crude weapons of stone, killed such huge animals as the mammoths and bisons, woolly rhinoceros and sabre-toothed tigers. They lived in comfortable caves and huts, or in peculiar kinds of houses called lake-dwellings built in the shallow waters of lakes and rivers. Perhaps a few families sometimes lived together and formed a group. With the formation of groups, words came into being, because it was words which could keep them together. All the members of a group would use the same words and get to feel the same ideas. By and by a great many different languages arose; that is, the same idea came to be expressed by different sounds in different groups of men. One amazing thing about these pre-historic



FIG. 2. SKELETONS OF APES AND MAN

a, gibbon ; b, orang ; c, chimpanzee, d, gorilla . e, man (after Huxley)

men is that on the walls of caves have been found many paintings of bison and reindeer and of hunting and fishing scenes which show great power of observation and fine artistic talent.

### NEOLITHIC AGE

The Cro-Magnon and similar types of human beings lived in the world probably for about fifteen thousand years. Then they were intermixed with men and women of the next age—the Neolithic or New Stone Age. This age is characterized by a higher degree of mental development and inventive ability. The weapons, though still made of stone, were more polished and of many kinds. Some of them had holes bored

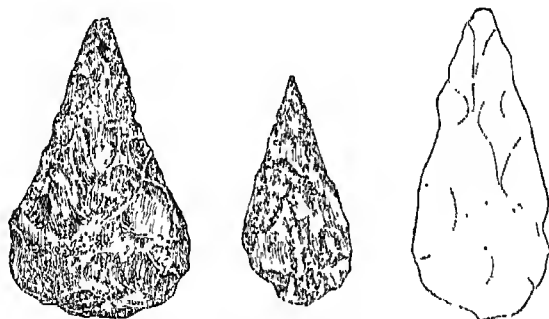


FIG. 3. EARLIER STONE AGE (palaeolithic)  
flint picks or hatches.

in them for wooden handles. Bows and arrows came into use, and continued to be the most important throwing weapons for hunting and fighting till the invention of gunpowder.

But the major developments of the Neolithic Age were not in the improvement of implements. They were in two other fields: domestication of animals and development of

agriculture. Neolithic men no longer depended for food merely upon hunting, fishing and the gathering of wild fruits. They had managed to tame certain species of wild animals for domestic use and agriculture. It should be observed that agriculture was one of the strongest agencies in promoting civilization. People who practised agriculture could not wander from place to place as did the primitive savages. They had to stay in one place and whatever improvement they made in their houses or fields became to them of permanent value and stimulated them to do more. Further, an agricultural people must have the political sense to live in peace, and where, irrigation is necessary, to work together and submit to the will of the majority. Thus, the

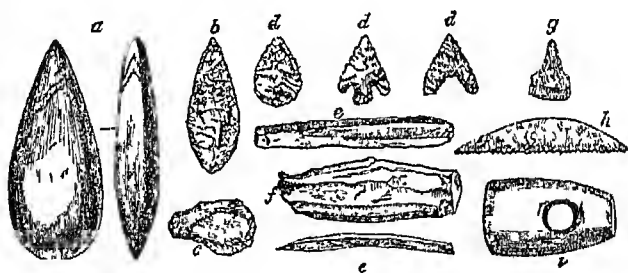


FIG. 4. LATER STONE AGE (neolithic) IMPLEMENTS

a, stone celt or hatchet; b, flint spear-head; c, scraper; d, arrow-heads; e, flint flake-knives; f, core from which flint-flakes taken off; g, flint-awl; h, flint saw; i, stone hammer-head.

earliest rudiments of civilized social and political life grew up in Egypt, Mesopotamia, Northern India and China where the plains of the Nile and the Euphrates, the Ganges and the Yangtze furnished the ideal environment for the arts of agriculture.

Among other distinctive features of the Neolithic Age is the introduction of pottery which was perhaps first used

for cooking. The Neolithic peoples knew the use of fire for cooking as well as for protecting themselves from cold and wild animals. They dressed themselves in skins but they also wore a rough kind of linen. In the course of time some kind of barter was introduced. These altered conditions gave men leisure for invention and speculation, and helped them to come out of barbarism more rapidly than before.

### AGE OF METALS

The New Stone Age developed into the Age of Metals which has been continuing in a sense even to the present time. The Age of Metals developed so gradually that we do not know exactly when and where copper, bronze and iron were first used. It appears that Neolithic culture began and ended at different times in different parts of the world. There was perhaps a very ancient copper age in the New World. But the religious fanaticism of the Spanish monks has destroyed many records that might have told us the story of that land and the evolution of its culture. It cannot now be said that the culture of the New World excluding Mexico, Yucatan, and Peru, went beyond the Neolithic Stage till the fifteenth or sixteenth century A. D. In most countries of Europe, Neolithic culture continued down to 2000 B.C. It was only in some parts of the Orient—in Egypt, Babylonia, India, China and Crete—that men learnt the use of metals eight thousand years ago, and evolved a civilization which, in some respects, was not inferior to the finest civilization of modern times.

### RACES OF MEN

Even before the close of the Pre-historic period, men developed different physical types. On the basis of these types, largely on the basis of the colour of their skin (though



such developments were mainly brought about by climatic influences and this basis cannot be regarded as fundamental), it has been usual to distinguish three main groups of men: (1) the Black or *Negroid* group, (2) the Yellow or *Mongoloid* group, and (3) the White or *Caucasian* group.

The Negroid group perhaps developed in the southern half of the Old World. In addition to woolly hair all the peoples of this group have dark, sometimes almost black skin, broad noses, thick lips, and a small brain in relation to their size. There are two principal types of Negroids. One is the short-statured Negritos who, at one time, lived along the entire sea coast from Arabia to China. They lived mostly on fishing, and the ancient Greek writers called them 'Ichthyophagri' or fish-eaters. The modern representatives of the Negritos are natives of the Malaya Islands, the Philippines and the unsettled parts of Australia. Some of the jungle tribes of South India and the Vedda of Ceylon are said to have negrito characteristics. The second type of Negroid includes the true Negroes of Central and Western Africa who have normal stature and long heads.

The Mongoloid group constitutes the largest division of modern peoples. The various representatives of this type are the people of Tibet, Indo-China, China and Formosa, those of many oceanic islands and of the north from Japan to Lapland. The peoples of this group once occupied the greater part of the North and South American continents. Their hair is black and straight, and their face is flattened with high cheek bones and slant eyes. It may be noticed that there is more uniformity in physical features among the Mongoloids than among the Negroid or Caucasian groups.

The Caucasian group has three main branches—the Hamitic, the Semitic and the Indo-European. The Hamitic branch is represented by the ancient Egyptians. The Semitic branch comprises the ancient Babylonians and

Assyrians, the Hebrews, the Phoenicians and the Arabians. The Indo-Europeans include the ancient Greeks and Romans, the long-headed Nordics occupying the northern half of Europe, the round-headed Alpines being distributed along the central zone of Europe from France to Russia, and the peoples of Persia and the greater portion of India.\* The Caucasian group has been termed 'white'. But the term should be liberally interpreted. There are other features which are recognized just as descriptive of the so-called 'white' race as is the white skin, viz., frontal development of the skull or high forehead, a long nose relatively narrow and high, and thin lips. Usually there is an abundance of hair on the face of the males. But their stature and the colour of their skin are very variable.

#### RACIAL FACTOR—A MYTH

By attaching too much importance to the distinctive physical marks of the various human groups some writers have attempted to prove that there must be fundamental internal qualities of certain groups to become the 'chosen people' of God on earth. Such acute race feeling has been a misfortune to the world and has intensified bitterness between men. For instance, until very recently the white nations of Western Europe were so strongly influenced by racial prejudice that 'racial' explanations of social phenomena were much in vogue among them. They regarded themselves as the born masters of the 'Coloured races'

\* There has been another way of sub-dividing the Caucasian group: the Nordic, the Alpine and the Mediterranean. The Nordics are typically represented by the Swedes and the Alpines by the Swiss. The Mediterranean is the type found generally in Southern Europe, South-western Asia, India, Northern and Eastern Africa and parts of the British Isles. The great civilizations of Sumeria, Babylonia, and Egypt were developed by the Mediterranean group.

when they came in contact with them in their new homes overseas. As a result on many occasions they were led to abuse their power in some way or other, and for this reason many coloured peoples disappeared from the earth.

But the superiority of one community over another on the basis of race will not stand scientific test. In the first place, differences in physical types which are now regarded as racial arose probably as a result of intermixture and different climatic influences and conditions of life over an immensely long period of time. Indeed, processes are still constantly at work to form new types of men, the world being made up of an almost infinite number of mixed types which grade imperceptibly into one another. In the language of H. G. Wells, 'Men and women are all mongrels showing in various proportions the characteristics of this imperfectly specialized type or that'. Secondly, the external characteristics on the basis of which mankind has been grouped into races are the results of, and are highly susceptible to change under the influence of geographical conditions. As regards mental traits it may be said that no study of bodily features has yet gone far in showing any relation between race and innate ability. On the contrary, the mental differences between one individual or selected groups of individuals of the same race are often found far greater than between any two living races as a whole. So the so-called racial explanation of the special contributions of certain types of men to the progress of civilization is untrue, and the attempt of some enthusiastic writers to account for the genesis of civilization in general by racial myths of 'Nordic Men' is pernicious nonsense.\*

\* See Grant—*The Passing of a Great Race*. Hitler dwelt on this theory in *Mein Kampf*, and Rosenberg, the philosopher of National Socialism, made it the basis of Nazi ideology.

## THE GEOGRAPHICAL BASIS OF HISTORY

It is easy to understand how men's faculties and capacity for work which directly affect the course of history are largely determined by climatic phenomena. Where the climate is stimulating the people's health is good. So they become industrious and energetic, and their energy enables them to put their ideas into practice. Such a people generally become honest, sober and self-controlled as it is easier to speak the truth or to control one's temper when one feels strong than when one feels weak. Next, climate has been one of the chief incentives of man to teach him foresight and to plan things intelligibly. Let us take, for instance, the savages in Equatorial Africa and those in Northern Europe. The former must needs provide themselves with some kind of warm covering, even if it be a covering of skins while the latter have no such need. 'Nor is food so easily obtained in Europe. It takes toil to get it. Thus, even when all races were savage we might expect to find a higher type of savage in Europe than in Africa, just because more mental activities are called into play by the very lack of solar energy'. Again, in equatorial regions and in Arctic zones one day is very much like another. The tendency of the peoples of those regions is not to look too far ahead, but to live in the present without any stimulating force for improvement. In a land where the climate is temperate but is marked by strong seasonal changes, the people are compelled to think of storing up food for seasons of scarcity. So long as men lived by hunting this was relatively unimportant, but when they gathered nuts or relied on farming and agriculture they could not live unless they stored up food in favourable seasons to last them during adverse times. Lastly, climate determines the supply of most of the materials needed not only for food

but also for clothing and shelter. When a people get their food, clothing and shelter with moderate effort, and get them in plenty for future use, they can have leisure to think and observe those natural orders on which all sciences are founded.

Closely connected with the influence of climate is that of physical environment. The influence of environment was even greater in ancient times when there was no steam and electricity, and natural boundaries and obstacles could not be easily overcome. Men had then to depend for their food, dress, industries and artistic creations on the materials available in the immediate neighbourhood, and their migrations, colonization, trade-routes and military campaigns had to follow the line of least resistance. For example, in ancient times an open country was liable to frequent invasions, but a country which was naturally protected by sandy deserts or high mountains or wide oceans was comparatively free from invasions and had better scope for progress.

It is not, however, suggested that every detail of history, every political event or individual initiative can be explained by geographical considerations. Civilization is a complex phenomenon, and its origin cannot be traced to any simple cause which can be demonstrated always and everywhere to produce an identical effect. What is meant is that geography forms, as it were, the explanatory foundations of great historic events—the climatic pulse 'has sent pain and decay to the lands whose day was done, life and vigour to those whose day was yet to be'.\*

We can here conveniently add a word on the geographical features of the ancient world which have profoundly affected the course of history. The Pre-historic

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\* Huntington—*The Pulse of Asia*.

period which the geologists call the Pleistocene Age, also referred to as the Great Ice Age, was an age of great climatic changes. During this period at least four glaciers covered many millions of square miles of the northern hemisphere. These glaciers were separated from each other by periods of milder climate. There are reasons to believe that the successive advance of the glaciers made great areas to the south of them desirable habitats. Thus North Africa and the Sahara as well as the whole of Central Asia as far north as Gobi and North China (which are now desert wastes) received much greater rainfall than at present and had a temperate or semi-tropical climate. As the glaciers receded and the climate of these regions became arid in the course of time there must have been frequent movements of people in search of a milder climate and more favourable conditions of existence. Evidences of such migrations are indicated by the distribution of fossils remains in different parts of the world.

It should be observed that in those days the earth presented an appearance different from what it does to-day. Java, with islands near to it, formed a part of South-eastern Asia. There were at least two land bridges connecting Europe and Africa—one across the Strait of Gibraltar, and another between Tunis, Malta, Sicily and Italy. The British Isles were joined to the mainland of Europe and a low plain filled the place of the North Sea. The New World could be reached by land from Asia across the Behring Strait and from Europe through the Orkneys, the Shetlands, Iceland and Greenland. Over this vast space early man wandered at random in search of food and shelter. It is significant that the implements of the first period of the Palaeolithic Age do not admit of classification. They present a remarkable resemblance to one another whether they are found in South India, South Africa, Egypt or Europe.

Even within historical times—at the beginning of the Christian era—the region we now call Central Asia supported a large population of nomads. As the plains began to grow drier and rainfall became more scanty and the land did not permit of an intensive cultivation, small bands of men united occasionally in larger groups were on the move and pressed in all directions for new pastures and fresh water supply. No one tribe could stay long in the place it occupied, for newer bands of restless nomads fell upon it. The migrations from Central Asia were mostly towards the West because of the natural barriers of mountains and deserts on the North and East and an artificial barrier like the Chinese Wall on the south. This condition had, as we shall see later on, far-reaching effects not only on the history of Asia but of Europe also.

It is believed that because of their frequent migrations the nomadic peoples acquired by necessity a sense of leadership and strategy which predisposed them to the ruling of territories and command of their fellow men, but their culture remained at a comparatively low stage until they had a settled life.

## CHAPTER II

### EGYPT AND THE EGYPTIANS

As far as we know, it was in the basins of the Nile and the Tigris-Euphrates that metal civilizations first made their appearance with agriculture, irrigation, organized social structure, and expressions of religious beliefs. The two civilizations were nearly contemporaneous, going as far back as 7000 B.C. There might have been equally early civilizations in other parts of the world, but they were probably effaced by the Aryan invaders who began their historical career as ruthless destroyers of older cultures. Let us begin with Egypt.

#### EGYPT, THE GIFT OF THE NILE

The land of Egypt is the 'gift of the Nile'. Every summer the Nile overflows its banks and turns the valley into a long shining lake. As the water recedes after summer it leaves on the soil a black layer very rich for growing crops and vegetables. But for this annual flood Egypt, with its lack of rainfall, would have been as barren as the deserts that encase it from the east and the west.

The fertility of Egypt easily attracted the nomads of the New Stone Age. They settled down in the valley and developed an elaborate art of agriculture. By cutting canals right and left of the river and making dikes and reservoirs, they controlled the overflow of the Nile and kept the land in good condition for miles around. Of course, one village community alone could not do this difficult task. Co-operation and organization were needed. With these two things the ancient Egyptians were able to obtain a



year's food in return for a few days' toil. They were thus provided with that leisure and sense of security which are essential for the growth of arts and sciences.

The natural boundary of the land further helped the early advance of civilization in Egypt. On the north there is the sea, on the east and west there are the deserts, and on the south there is a barren tract called Nubia. No ancient people could overcome these barriers easily. The only route connecting Egypt with the outside world lay through the Isthmus of Suez and the Peninsula of Sinai, and it was by this route that the Hyksos and other invaders entered the country.

### THIRTY-ONE DYNASTIES IN EGYPT

What races of men first inhabited Egypt we do not know, but it is probable that notwithstanding the well-protected state of the land there must have been a mixture from the beginning due to the pressure of the influx of Mediterranean peoples from Asia and Europe and of the Negroids from Africa. Within historical times there have been only two or three periods when the country was disturbed by foreign invasion. It may be observed that the Egyptian cities remained unwalled while the cities of Mesopotamia piled up fortifications not only against each other but also against the nomad invaders from the mountains.

For hundreds of years the villagers along the Nile continued to cultivate the soil under the leadership of their tribal chieftains. Gradually two kingdoms arose—Lower Egypt, near the mouth of the river, and Upper Egypt comprising the valley extending southward for about 600 miles with an average width of 10 miles only. About 3500 B.C., the two kingdoms were brought under one rule by Menes who became the first king of Egypt, with his capital at

Memphis on the Nile, just above the head of the Delta. From this time begins the dynastic period of Egyptian history, which lasted for more than three thousand years. During all these years Egypt was governed by the King whose official title was the Pharaoh. He was considered as a god, having divine powers and qualities. Next to the king were priests and nobles who formed the two privileged classes wielding great influence over the people. For purposes of administration the country was divided into several districts called *nomes*, each of which had its own *nomarch* or governor. The *nomarch* collected taxes in his district, which were paid in kind, coins being unknown among the Egyptians till the fourth century B.C. Below the *nomarch* there were other government officials and soldiers who carried out the king's commands. The next classes were the merchants and craftsmen who mostly lived in the cities. Lastly, there were peasants and labourers called *jellahin* who, like the medieval serfs, were bound to the soil. They tilled the fields and toiled at the irrigation work.

The Pharaohs who reigned in Egypt are grouped in thirty-one Dynasties, and their history falls under three main periods: the Old or Memphite Kingdom (3500-2700 B.C.); the Middle Kingdom (2400-1800 B.C.); the New Kingdom or the Empire (1600-1000 B.C.). Those eras not covered by the dates just given were periods of transition or trouble. The period of Egyptian history after 1000 B.C. has been called the Saïte period, after the name of its capital at Saïs near the Delta. It was a period of decline which lasted down to 332 B.C. when Alexander the Great conquered the country.

### THE OLD KINGDOM

The Old Kingdom reached its glorious epoch during the reign of the Pharaohs of the Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth

Dynasties. Some of those Pharaohs, notably the Pharaoh Khufu of the Fourth Dynasty, were great pyramid builders, some were great conquerors who founded a vast empire including Libya and Nubia, and some were great administrators who organized an efficient system of government, brought the irrigation system to a high state of perfection and ruled the country with a host of officials.

After the close of the Sixth Dynasty there followed a long period of confusion and anarchy. According to a story, the Seventh Dynasty contained 70 kings who reigned for 70 days only. The weakness of the central power allowed the *nomarchs* to become independent in their respective *nomes*. The negro tribes invaded the country from the south, and the Delta broke away from Upper Egypt. The era is known as the Age of Nobles or the Feudal Age, when there was virtual disappearance of royal authority. The Old Kingdom had come to an end.

### THE MIDDLE KINGDOM

The Middle Kingdom in Egyptian history began with the establishment of the Eleventh Dynasty, when the government became centralized again and order was restored. Thebes in Upper Egypt replaced Memphis as the capital of the Kingdom. The period of the Twelfth Dynasty was especially the classical age of Egyptian literature, arts and industries. The country enjoyed two centuries of continued prosperity (2000 to 1788 B.C.) due to a great scheme of land reclamation by transforming Lake Moeris in the Fayum\* into a vast reservoir for irrigation purposes. The royal residence was now removed from Thebes to a more central place at Lisht near Memphis, and the power

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\* A big basin or depression west of the Nile, the bottom of which is about one hundred and fifty feet below sea level.

of the nobles was thoroughly curbed by the administrative authority of royal officials.

With the end of the Twelfth Dynasty, began the second period of anarchy lasting for several centuries. For a considerable part of this period, Egypt was ruled by foreign invaders known as the Hyksos. The Hyksos were perhaps a mixed horde of pastoral nomads who had established themselves in northern Syria. From there they pushed on southward and crossed into Egypt which they ruled for about two hundred years. It is said that the Hyksos introduced the horse into Egypt. But the Hyksos could not permanently maintain their position as conquerors because of their lax rule. Their domination in Egypt was overthrown (1580 B.C.) by the revolt of the native king Amosis who founded the Eighteenth Dynasty.

### THE NEW KINGDOM OR EMPIRE

With the overthrow of the Hyksos and establishment of the Eighteenth Dynasty, a new era commenced in Egyptian history. Hitherto the Egyptians had not made any serious efforts to gain territory outside the Nile Valley and the Delta, but now they embarked on a deliberate policy of foreign conquests. During the period of the Eighteenth, Nineteenth and Twentieth Dynasties the power of the Pharaohs extended from the Sahara to the Euphrates. This period (1600-1000 B.C.) is therefore called the Empire.

Three of the most notable Pharaohs of the Empire were Thothmes III and Amenhotep IV (also called Ikhnaton) of the Eighteenth Dynasty, and Rameses II of the Nineteenth Dynasty. The first may be called the Napoleon of ancient Egypt. He made seventeen campaigns in nineteen years, conquered Palestine, Syria and Phoenicia, and carried his power to the Aegian Islands. Amenhotep IV removed his

capital from Thebes to Tell-el-Amarna and became notable as a great religious reformer who attempted to enforce the worship of a single God, Aton, in place of many. Rameses II recovered the military glory of Egypt. He fought against

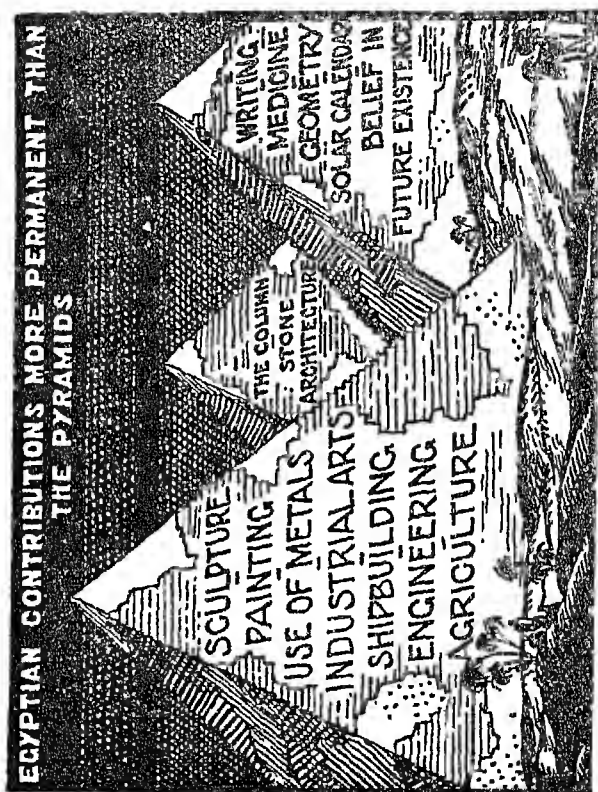


FIG. 5.

the Hittites, with whom he ultimately made peace and passed the remaining period of his long reign in building many structures from the Delta to Abu Simbel in Nubia. The

succeeding Pharaohs also continued to be powerful rulers. During their time Egypt often held friendly relations with the ancient peoples of Mesopotamia, and the two civilizations enjoyed interchange of possessions and ideas.

About the eleventh century B.C. the rivalry between the royal power and the priests weakened Egypt. A long period of disorder began, and from the beginning of the seventh century B.C. Egypt was conquered in turn by the Assyrians, by the Persians, and much later by the Macedonians under Alexander the Great. After Alexander's death Egypt was ruled by the Ptolemies, until it was made a part of the Roman empire in the first century A.D.

#### EGYPT'S CONTRIBUTION TO CIVILIZATION

Perhaps the most important of the many wonderful things which the ancient Egyptians did and which have had a permanent effect upon the world's civilization was the working out of a system of writing for expressing their ideas. It was a picture writing in which written words were pictures of the things they meant. Thus, the picture-word for 'worship' would be a man kneeling. This system of writing is known as *hieroglyphics* (literally 'priest's writing'). The hieroglyphics went through different stages, until the pictures which they wrote did not represent *ideas* as before, but represented sounds instead.\* In the seventh century B.C., a simpler form called 'demotic' which could be written faster than hieroglyphic came to be introduced. It appears that at first the Egyptians cut their hieroglyphics† on stones. Later

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\* "But when a larger number of pictures had become phonetic signs, each representing a syllable, it was possible for the Egyptian to write any word he knew, whether the word meant a thing of which he could draw a picture or not. This possession of phonetic signs is what makes real writing for the first time." Robinson & Bristow—*Outlines of European History*. Part I, p. 22.

† The key to hieroglyphic writing was furnished by Rosetta Stone which was found at the Nile Delta by Napoleon's soldiers in 1798.

they made ink with vegetable gum and soot from the cooking pots, and used pointed reeds for pens. They also learned to make paper from the papyrus reed.

The Egyptians worshipped many gods paying special honour to Ra the Sun-god and Osiris the god of the Nile and judge of the dead. They considered the cow and the bull as sacred animals. A new chapter in the religious history of Egypt began when Amenhotep IV, as has been already mentioned, abolished polytheism or the worship of many gods, and induced his people to worship only the Sun-god whom he called Aton. The temple of Karnak, sacred to Amen-Ra as well as other temples of the old gods were

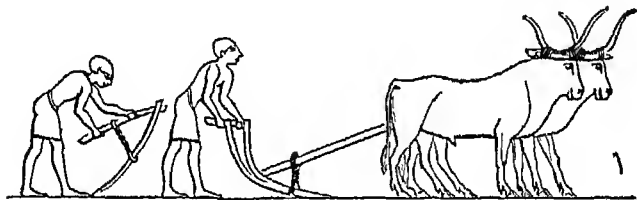


FIG. 6. Ancient Egyptian Hoe and Plough.

closed, but the religious reformation of Amenhotep, owing to the opposition of the priests, did not long survive him. The old religion with the friendly animal gods was restored under his son-in-law Tutankhamen who once again removed the capital of Egypt from Tel-el-Amarna to Thebes.

The deep religious instinct of the Egyptians helped to produce many elements of civilization. They believed in a life after death and this belief was strengthened by the obser-

The stone had the same inscription in three languages—hieroglyphics, demotic, and Greek. The proper names in the inscription which were the same in the Greek as in the hieroglyphics supplied to a French scholar named Chamollion the first clues of deciphering the mysterious language of the Nile Valley. The Rosetta Stone is now in the British Museum.

vation of seasonal variations. When a king died the people could not believe that he was no more. They thought that the soul would live as long as it 'had a home', and they preserved the body of the deceased person by an effective process of embalming. A body thus protected against decay is called a mummy. When a Pharaoh died the Egyptians liked to lay his mummy in a chamber in the centre of a stone mountain where the body might be kept in tact. The mummies of almost all the Pharaohs of the Eighteenth, Nineteenth, Twentieth and Twenty-first Dynasties have been found in a secret rock chamber near Thebes, and their faces have been very remarkably preserved to this day. Food, clothing, weapons, and other articles which the soul might need were placed in the tomb, as well as a copy of the *Book of the Dead*. The last was a collection of prayers and priestly instructions to help the deceased person in the next world.

It was also religious inspiration which made the Egyptians the world's first great builders. The pyramids were built as tombs of the Pharaohs. They are mountains of solid stone and brick, having small rooms in the centre for the mummies of the Pharaohs to lie in. The largest of the Pyramids is the 'Great Pyramid' of Gizah built by King Khufu of the Fourth Dynasty. It is 476 feet in height and comprises more than two million huge blocks of limestone, each weighing about two and a half tons. It still remains the greatest structure ever crected by man, and one of the seven wonders of the world. Among the Egyptian temples we may here mention the temple of Karnak which was begun during 2300 B.C. and whose walls were completed about 2000 years afterwards by the Ptolemies, the Greek kings of Egypt. The Egyptians also built other marvellous structures, rock-cut tombs, and statues, the most remarkable of which is the Great Sphinx having the head of a man upon



the body of a lion. All these show the wonderful skill of the Egyptians as architects, sculptors and stone-cutters.

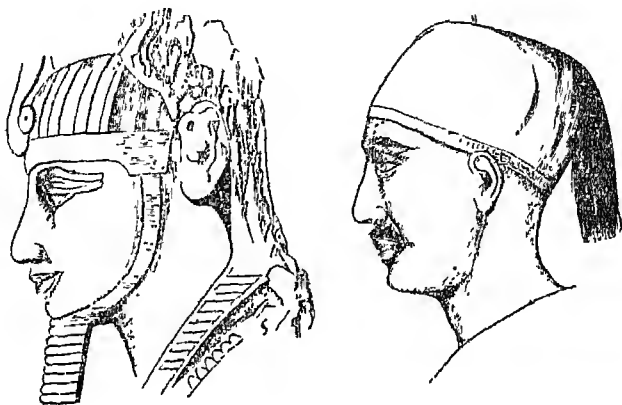


FIG. 7. (a) Head of Ramses II, Ancient Egypt. (b) Sheikh's son, Modern Egypt (after Hartmann.)

Again, religion influenced the Egyptians to become astronomers. They studied the cyclic movements of the heavenly bodies in the clear rainless sky, by which they came to know beforehand when to start sowing and when the Nile flood was coming. At first they measured time by the moon. But before 4000 B.C., they made up a calendar of 365 days, each day being divided into two periods of twelve hours each. This calendar was introduced by Julius Caesar into the Roman Empire. Being slightly reformed by Pope Gregory XIII it has been current among most of the civilized nations up to the present day.

The strongly religious habits of the Egyptians and their superstitions prevented to a great extent the rise of a scientific spirit. But they made tremendous contributions

to the practical arts. They were perhaps the first builders of ships capable of carrying a sea-borne trade. A canal was dug connecting the Red Sea with one of the branches of the Nile Delta. This Canal served the purpose of the present Suez Canal. As farmers, the Egyptians devised a system of irrigation and learned to grow different kinds of crops. As artisans, they made use of metals, fashioning weapons and tools of bronze which were far more effective than those made of stone. Music developed, and lovely musical instruments were made. On the walls of tombs they carved and painted many scenes of every-day life. They also learned to weave and dye linen cloth, and to make beautiful glassware and fine pottery. Egyptian commerce was carried on with the peoples of Punt (Somaliland) and the Eastern Mediterranean. In later times the commercial contact of Egypt with her neighbouring island Cete led to the spread of civilizing forces westward through Greece and Rome.

## CHAPTER III

### EARLY CIVILIZATION IN WESTERN ASIA

#### 1. MESOPOTAMIA, THE LAND OF TWO RIVERS

While men were building civilization in the land of the Nile, a similar growth was taking place in western Asia in the river valley of the Euphrates and the Tigris. The Greeks named the Euphrates-Tigris valley as Mesopotamia, 'the land between the rivers'. In ancient times the northern part of Mesopotamia was known as Assyria while the southern part of the delta region was called Babylonia. Babylonia again comprised two districts—the southern district was called Sumer and the northern up-stream was given the name of Akkad.

Mesopotamia, like Egypt, is a land of very scanty rainfall. But like the Nile, the Euphrates and the Tigris rise over their banks every summer by the melting of the snow in the Armenian mountains, and sweep over the lowlands leaving behind a deposit of silt and mud good for agriculture. In another respect Egypt and Mesopotamia are similar. The Nile as well as the Euphrates and the Tigris spread out in swamps and marshes as they approach the sea.

But unlike Egypt, Mesopotamia was almost unprotected on three sides. To the north and east of Mesopotamia rise limestone mountain ranges having deep valleys capable of supporting a considerable population. To the west and south-west lie the steppes or grassy downs which became the abode of nomads. Both from the mountains and the steppes various peoples attacked the valley-land and came to settle there. The result was that whereas in Egypt the

geographical factors worked to produce a relatively homogeneous civilization, those in Mesopotamia led to the rise and fall of one civilization after another.

### SUMER AND AKKAD

About 5000 B.C. or possibly earlier, the Sumerians, a people of unknown origin, built up a civilization whose ruins have been recently discovered by archaeologists. It seems that the Sumerians had numerous city-states which were always quarrelling with one another for water rights and overlordship of the country. One of the greatest of such cities was perhaps Nippur on the Euphrates. Another city built by the Sumerians was Ur where many traces of the historic civilization of Sumer were discovered in 1927-1928. The finds take us back to about 3500 B.C.

About the same time the northern Babylonia or Akkad was inhabited by the Semites who came from the Arabian desert. The Semites began a settled agricultural life, established city-states of their own, and fought frequently with the Sumerians, but the superior arms of the latter could hold the Semites off for many years. At last, about 2750 B.C., there arose in Akkad, a Semitic chieftain named Sargon I who defeated the Sumerians and brought under him all the Sumerian towns down to the mouths of the two rivers. Sargon adopted the civilization of the conquered people, and the empire established by him endured, in spite of civil wars, for over two hundred years. The kings of this period called themselves 'Kings of Sumer and Akkad'. Some of these kings were of Sumerian birth, and others were Semites.

### THE CODE OF HAMMURABI—BABYLONIAN CIVILIZATION

As the Sumerian-Akkadian empire declined, new tribes entered on the scene. Among them were the Elamites who

occupied the south and the Amorites of Syria who settled near the small village of Babylon on the Euphrates. About 2100 B.C. a great leader named Hammurabi rose among the Amorites. He overthrew the Elamite dynasty, united Sumer and Akkad once more, and renamed the conquered territory as Babylonia in order to glorify his native city Babylon.

Hammurabi brought all of Mesopotamia under him, and carried out extensive public works throughout the country. He was also a great organizer and administrator. He collected the laws of his people into a code, now called 'the Code of Hammurabi'. This Code, which was a re-issue of the ancient Sumerian laws, was engraved on a huge block of stone eight feet high, and set up in the temple at Babylon. The stone was discovered and brought to light by the French archaeologist M. de Morgan in 1901-1902. It contains laws dealing with property rights, financial business, and marriage contracts. The Code also provided for the protection of widows, orphans and the poor. On one point, however, the Code was harsh. With regard to damages for personal injury, the law attempted to balance them on the basis of 'an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth'; that is, if one man hurt another, the offender was to be hurt in the same way. Nevertheless, on the whole Hammurabi's Code was perhaps the oldest and the most notable set of laws that had yet been made and obeyed in the world.

Under the rule of Hammurabi, Babylon became the centre not only of an organized government but of a high class civilization. That civilization was, in fact, a development of the more ancient Sumerian civilization. Religion, of course played an important part in it, as it did in every ancient civilization. There were many gods—nature gods,

local city gods and a host of lesser gods. The chief of the gods was Marduk who took the place of the Sumerian god Enlil, once the patron deity of Nippur. Another was Ishtar, the goddess of love who can be identified with the later Greek goddess Aphrodite and the Roman goddess Venus. The gods were worshipped by a powerful priest class. The priests claimed the ability to foretell future events by studying the signs on the liver of the sacrificial animals, as the liver was regarded as the one and only organ of life, and so the reflex of the mind of the gods. Another way of foretelling the future was by the study of the science of astrology, the forerunner of astronomy. The Babylonians, like the ancient Egyptians, used a calendar. The year was divided into months, weeks, days, hours, and minutes; and the number sixty was used as a unit of measurement. This number has been preserved to this day in our divisions of the hour and the minute. The invention of the sun-dial and water-clock and the foretelling of eclipses of the sun and the moon were among the other achievements of the Babylonians.

The Babylonian merchants carried on commerce, at first, by barter, but later on, by the use of fixed weights and measures. They devised a system of keeping accounts and of banking. From the earliest times the Babylonians had a kind of writing called *cuneiform* because wedge-shaped signs were used in it. The signs were incised with a reed on soft clay tablets which were then hardened by baking. Hundreds of these tablets comprising private letters, business contracts and royal orders have been found preserved in temples and public libraries. The key to the *cuneiform* writing was found by scholars from an inscription at Behistan in Persia. This Behistan inscription may be called 'The Rosetta Stone of Asia'.

## THE KASSITES

After the death of Hammurabi the actual course of events in Babylonian history is extremely uncertain. The Empire began to decline slowly. In the lower Tigris there grew up a 'Kingdom of the sea country' which was in frequent conflict with the successors of Hammurabi, while the Hittites from behind the mountains of the north-west made frequent raids on Upper Mesopotamia. Then, about the middle of the eighteenth century B.C., that is, about the time of the conquest of Egypt by the Hyksos, the Kassites under their leader Gandash conquered Babylonia and ruled it for some centuries.

The Kassites were rude barbarians who came from the eastern mountains. They were a tribe of as yet unknown origin, but the names of their royal families seem to be Indo-European. Under their rule Babylon recovered something of her old ascendancy. The Kingdom of the sea country faded out and was absorbed, and neighbouring peoples paid homage to Babylon.

## THE MITANNIS

When the Kassites were ruling over Babylonia, a new state—that of the Mitannis—arose in Upper Mesopotamia. The Mitannis were probably the first Aryan-speaking power to appear on the scene. The names of Mitanni rulers such as Tushratta, Dusratta, Shutarna; Mitanni gods such as Mitta and Varuna; and Mitanni words such as Satta (seven) are found to contain Indian (Prakrit) elements. As to whether the rulers were of the same blood and speech as their subjects we cannot be perfectly sure.

It is probable that while the Indo-Iranians moved eastward and southward, a group became detached from the main body, advanced westward through Iran and

established a Kingdom in Upper Mesopotamia. This was the Kingdom of the Mitannis. But with the powerful Assyrians on the south-east, the Syrians on the west, and the Hittite storm cloud on the Taurus mountain, the Mitannis were content to abide in their own settlements without any extension of conquest. The Mitanni kingdom finally disappeared from history in 1275 B.C. when it was devastated by an Assyrian king.

### THE ASSYRIANS

About 1169 B.C. Babylonia passed under the rule of the Assyrians, a people of Semitic origin who had come from the Syrian desert and occupied the upper Tigris. Their chief cities were Assur and Nineveh. The latter for a time took the place of Babylon as the leading city of Mesopotamia.

It was after the Kassite dominion had come to an end that the rulers of Assyria entered the main current of world history in the thirteenth century B.C. They not only became completely independent but also followed up an aggressive policy which, with many twists and turns, made them masters of a large portion of the ancient world. They conquered Babylon, beat their western enemies and occupied the chief Aramean city, Damascus. They even advanced upon the Mediterranean coasts where Egyptian supremacy had collapsed two generations before, and, for a short time, subdued Egypt as well. Then, due to incessant warfare the Assyrians suffered a period of exhaustion when most of their enemies including Babylon recovered independence. The Assyrian glory was again however revived in the ninth century B.C. and continued to flourish till it was ended by the Chaldeans towards the end of the seventh century B.C.

It has been said that 'the story of Assyria is in the main a story of the Assyrian Kings'. The people in general were



nothing but a race of hunters and soldiers who were always on campaigns. The kings personally commanded the armies, administered justice and acted as the high-priests of the god Assur, in whose name they ruled. Many of the Assyrian kings became renowned personages of the ancient world by carrying out a policy of terrorism which was not equalled in human history till our own times. They waged ruthless war against their neighbours apparently for the mere pleasure of slaying and plundering. The war captives were beheaded, maimed, flayed or burnt alive, and the kings were proud to record such frightful deeds in monuments. Sometimes entire peoples were reduced into slavery. In 722 B.C. when Sargon II became King of Assyria he captured Samaria the capital of the kingdom of Israel and led away thousands of its leading citizens into lifelong captivity. The Israelite prisoners are known as 'the Lost Ten Tribes' because nobody ever heard of them again. Sargon's son, Sennacherib, made the name of Assyria feared all over the known world. Babylon was sacked and Palestine and Egypt fell before him, but Sennacherib failed to capture Jerusalem, as his troops were swept away by pestilence.

The last great king of Assyria was perhaps Ashurbanipal (668-625 B.C.). He made two successful campaigns into Egypt and kept Palestine and Syria submissive. Practically the whole of western Asia, from Media to the Red Sea and the Mediterranean, acknowledged him as its overlord. He thus ruled over the largest empire yet formed. The closing years of Ashurbanipal's reign were troubled by family quarrels, and within twenty years after his death the whole Assyrian Empire—an achievement of centuries—collapsed like a house of cards.

The rapidity with which the Assyrian Empire declined is a sad reflection not only on the transitoriness of all worldly power but also upon the weakness of the foundation upon

which that empire was built. It was composed of jarring elements which could not be kept together for long. Even within Assyria itself there were strong factions which threatened her unity at frequent intervals. Besides, the cruelty of the Assyrians made them hateful to their numerous subjects. When the old native Assyrian fighting force was found completely depleted by endless wars, the Chaldeans of Babylon in alliance with the Medes of Iran attacked Sardanapalus, the last king of Assyria. Sardanapalus was unable to withstand his united enemies. Nineveh was stormed and thoroughly destroyed (612 B.C.) and records of the Assyrian Kings soon lay buried beneath the Mesopotamian sand till they were unearthed by two archaeologists, Botta and Layard, in the middle of the nineteenth century A.D.

#### ASSYRIAN CONTRIBUTIONS TO CIVILIZATION

We must not, however, take leave of Assyria without saying a word in respect of her achievements in other fields than cruelty and conquests. During the period of her ascendancy Nineveh was the cultural as well as the military centre of the Near East. This imperial city was decorated with all the treasures captured in war by the Assyrian kings. Sennacherib made her more grand and wonderful than ever before. Though the Assyrian kings showed no interest in intellectual pursuits, there was one exception. Ashurbanipal had a genuine love of learning and in his palace at Nineveh he collected a great library containing important literary productions of the past.

The Assyrians have been called 'the Romans of Asia'. Like the Romans, they not only had great military skill and prowess but they were also able to establish a highly efficient central government and an excellent system of administration of the provinces. A royal postal service was

set up for keeping the emperor in constant touch with the conquered territories through official letters and reports. In the art of warfare the Assyrians largely used weapons of iron, had a standing army, and introduced cavalry instead of chariots. Unconsciously, the very inhuman policy of the Assyrians led them to play an important part in world history. Through blood and brutality, devastation and massacre, they united all the peoples of a vast realm beneath the same yoke and diffused a homogeneous culture throughout, as the Romans spread the Hellenic culture among all the peoples of the Mediterranean many centuries later. It is true that the peace which the Assyrians established was the peace of the burial ground, and it gave place to revolts of all the oppressed peoples as soon as the Empire became weak, but this work of the Assyrians outlived them. Under a variety of names and masters the Assyrian Empire, 'which was to be handed down in turn to the Chaldeans, the Achaemenids, the Macedonians, the Sasanids and the Arabs, was to remain one of the most constant historical factors, and bore to the end the stamp of the materialistic civilization of Nineveh and Babylon.'\*

#### THE CHALDEAN OR NEW BABYLONIAN EMPIRE

The two victors of the Assyrian Empire divided the spoils between them. Nabopolassar who now made himself king of Babylon got Mesopotamia and Syria, and Cyaxares, king of the Medes took all that lay east and north of the Tigris. The New Babylonian Empire is also called Chaldean according to the name of the Semitic tribe to which Nabopolassar belonged. The mightiest of the Chaldean kings was Nebuchadnezzar (604-561 B.C.). The Jews caused

\* Grousset—*The Civilisations of the East*, vol. I, pp. 88-89.

him some trouble. He, therefore, destroyed Jerusalem, and carried the Jews to captivity in Babylon. During his reign of forty years Babylon took the place of Nineveh in grandeur and luxury. The Hanging Gardens which Nebuchadnezzar caused to be made on the roof of the Palace and the Great Walls with which he surrounded the city were among the great wonders of the ancient world. According to legends Nebuchadnezzar built the Hanging Gardens to please his Median queen who longed for the forest-clad hills of her northern home.

Among the other achievements of the Chaldeans were the development of trade and commerce as well as of literature and science. A most notable advance was made in the science of astronomy. The Chaldean astronomers could foretell an eclipse by studying the movement of heavenly bodies, and their work was the foundation upon which western astronomy was subsequently built.

The period of Chaldean supremacy was, however, short-lived. In 559 B.C. the last Chaldean emperor Belshazzar gave way to Cyrus the Great of Persia.

## 2. SYRIA AND ASIA MINOR

While civilization was rising and declining in the river-valleys of Egypt and Mesopotamia, some other peoples who came from the east built up parallel civilizations in Syria and Asia Minor (now known as Anatolia).

The region called Syria is a narrow strip of country which lies midway between Mesopotamia and Egypt. It was, therefore, open to invasion by both. For 3000 years during which period Egypt and Mesopotamia were the most important countries of the Near East, they sought to establish control over Syria. This control was never very effective. About 1000 B.C. Syria contained at least two small

kingdoms—Phoenicia and Canaan. Later, the land of Canaan became known as Palestine.

### THE PHOENICIANS

Phoenicia lay in northern Syria between the mountains and the Mediterranean Sea. The soil of Phoenicia was inadequate to support the inhabitants who, therefore, took readily to the sea and became expert sailors and traders of ancient times. Phoenician vessels sailed along the entire Mediterranean coasts, found their way through the passage which the Greeks called the Pillars of Hercules (the Straits of Gibraltar) and visited France, Spain and even Britain. By land also the Phoenicians profited from the caravan trade with Mesopotamia and the land of Canaan. They imported some raw materials, such as copper, tin, iron and gold, and exported manufactured articles of wood, pottery, dyed cloth, glass and metal. Another craft in which the Phoenicians excelled was carpentry. It is said that king Solomon of Israel employed Phoenician carpenters in erecting the temple at Jerusalem.

Though the Phoenicians never built an empire they had some strongly fortified cities, each of which was ruled by a king. At least two such cities, Tyre and Sidon, grew into thriving trading centres. Tyrian purple, a dye made from a species of shellfish, was used among all the peoples of those days for garments of kings and great lords. In the ninth century B.C. colonists from Tyre migrated to northern Africa and founded Carthage. Of Carthage we shall have more to tell hereafter.

The Phoenicians may be called the 'missionaries of ancient civilization,' who carried the arts and products of the Orient far and wide. The barbarians of the West received through the Phoenicians the cloth, the jewels and other materials of the peoples of the East, and receiving

them, they learned to imitate them. The greatest contribution of the Phoenicians to the progress of ancient civilization was the spread of an alphabet. This they adopted from the Egyptians, the Babylonians and the Hebrews. Later, they perfected this alphabet which came to consist of twenty-two letters or symbols each letter representing a single

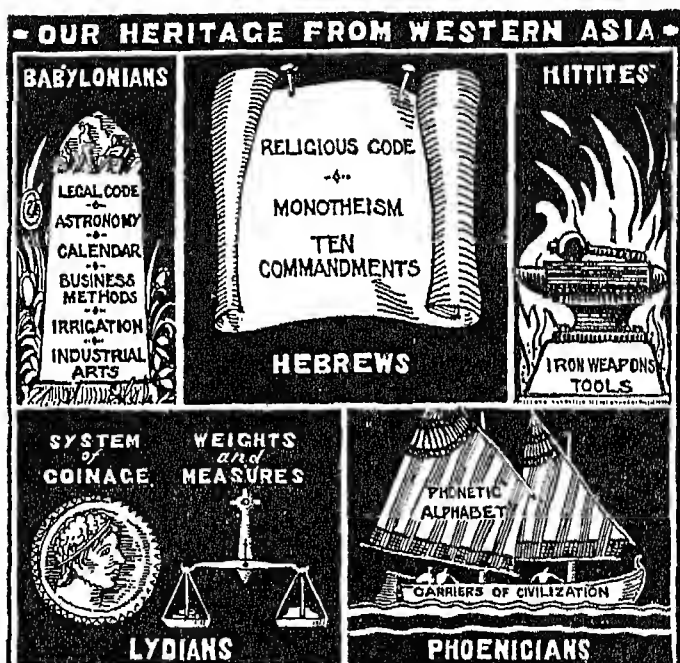


FIG. 8.

consonant sound. Modified by the Greeks, who added vowels, and then by the Romans, this became the basis of all systems of writings used by the Western world.

## THE HEBREWS

When the Semites had descended from the mountains of Armenia into the plains of the Euphrates, one of their tribes crossed the river and came to the land of Canaan. The newcomers were the Israelites, whom the Canaanites called Hebrews.

Like the Arabs, the Hebrews, following the story of the Bible, claimed that Abraham was their ancestor, and that he had migrated from Ur to Palestine. We also read in the Bible that Abraham was obliged at one time to go to Egypt to buy food, that the Hebrews of Egypt were enslaved by the Pharaohs, and, later on, rescued by Moses. Next, the children of Abraham, grown now to a host of Twelve Tribes, came back into Palestine and conquered the Canaanites. They waged constant war against their neighbours, the Philistines or the Aegean peoples and the Phoenicians who occupied the sea coasts. Though the historical value of these stories cannot be accurately determined, it is pretty certain that the Hebrews continued to be a wandering people. They did not till the soil, and had no houses; they moved from place to place with their herds of sheep and camels, living in tents as the Arabs of the desert do to this day.

At first, the Hebrews were ruled by their high priests, or judges, but their increasing number and the examples of the neighbouring nations led them to choose Saul as their first King towards the end of the eleventh century B.C. Saul perished under the hail of the Philistine arrows at the battle of Mount Gilboa. Under his successor, David, the Hebrews became a united nation, with Jerusalem as their capital. During the reign of David's son, Solomon (971-933 B.C.), the Hebrew kingdom reached its greatest glory. He completed the building of a great religious temple at Jerusalem which then became a magnificent city. But the

reign of Solomon, though brilliant, was disastrous in the end. In order to carry on his vast projects he taxed his people heavily. When his successor refused to lighten those taxes rebellions broke out which led to a division of the kingdom into *Judah* and *Israel*. They were, however, too weak to withstand the powerful rulers of Mesopotamia. In 722 B.C., Israel, with its capital Samaria, was conquered by Assyria, and her people swept away and lost to history. King Nebuchadnezzar did likewise for the southern kingdom of Judah. He sacked Jerusalem and carried the Jews\* off into captivity (586 B.C.). There they remained until Cyrus took Babylon and sent them back to resettle their country. But the Jews have remained scattered to this day. We now speak of Zionism which is a movement to recolonize Palestine with the Jews.

The contributions of the Hebrews to science and art are not of any importance; nor were they very important politically. However they made one supreme contribution in the field of religion. While the other neighbouring peoples worshipped many gods, represented concretely by idols and sacred animals, the Hebrews believed in a single god. At first their belief was in a tribal war-god; but later on they learned to conceive of one Supreme Being who ruled the universe through love. The Hebrews also developed a high moral code embodied in the Ten Commandments which their God *Jehovah* dictated to Moses on Mount Sinai. In their Sacred Book known as the Old Testament we find accounts of their early wanderings and sufferings and also the basic ideas which the Hebrews developed, and which, as Christianity, afterwards spread throughout the world.

\* After the destruction of the two Hebrew Kingdoms, the Hebrews were generally called 'Jews'.



### THE HITTITES

Like Syria, Asia Minor, at present the land of the Turkish Republic, was another region in which civilized life developed under the influence of Egypt and Mesopotamia. About 1900 B.C., the Hittites, originally a northern race of brigands who built strong castles on the hills, brought almost the whole of Asia Minor under their sway. They were able to hold the Assyrians long in check and destroyed much of the empire which Pharaoh Tutmose had established. The power of the Hittite kings was destroyed in the twelfth century B.C. by invasions of many tribes of a fierce northern people who are supposed by many historians to have been the first true Greeks.

The Hittites absorbed much of the Egyptian and Babylonian cultures, and they developed new skill in architecture and stone masonry. There are two other reasons for which the Hittites are important. In the first place, their kingdom lay between Mesopotamia and the islands of the Aegean and it served as an agent in the spread of civilization to Europe. Secondly, the Hittites started iron mines found in the mountains of their country and found that iron made better weapons and tools than bronze. The decipherment of the Hittite inscriptions is still in its initial stage, but it is probable that the Hittite language was Indo-European in grammatical structure, and they themselves were an Aryan race.

### THE LYDIANS

Many centuries after the downfall of the Hittite Empire, there grew up in the western part of Asia Minor a kingdom known as Lydia. The capital city of Lydia was Sardis, and the last and most famous of the Lydian kings was Croesus. Croesus was so wealthy that his name passed into a proverb

'Rich as Croesus'. But the Lydian kingdom was abruptly brought to an end by the greater military power of Cyrus, King of Persia.

The Lydians may be remembered for their two contributions to the spread of trade and commerce: they were among the first to mint gold and silver coins; and they used a regular system of weights and measures.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE STORY OF ANCIENT IRAN

The Iranian tableland extends from the mountains east of the Tigris to the Indus Valley, and from the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean to the Caspian Sea and the Jaxartes River. It is essentially a barren land with no great rivers carrying fertilizing mud upon the flats, but the hills are high enough in places to accumulate snow which feeds streams and make them useful for irrigation purposes. Great heat and great cold alternate throughout the year—the Persian Gulf is the hottest place on the earth. The climate is dry and it keeps the energy and intelligence of the people upon a distinctly high plane.

From very early times Iran has been the connecting link between the nomad lands of Central Asia and the desert lands of Arabia and the Sahara. It has, therefore, been a land of half-and-half—half nomad people and half oasis people.

#### THE ELAMITES

The earliest inhabitants of Iran of whom we have any knowledge are the Elamites who occupied the south-west part of the country as early as 4000 B.C. The Elamites were probably of Turanian stock, that is, related to the Turks of Central Asia. Evidences of archaeology and language point to the conclusion that they were in contact with the Babylonians and the Assyrians as well as with the proto-Dravidians of India.

The strongest cities of the Elamites were Awan and Susa. After centuries of hard struggle these cities were taken by

Sargon of Akkad, and the Elamites continued to live under Semitic suzerainty and adopt Semitic speech. Next, Hammurabi, and after him, the Kassites became masters of Elam.

After the decline of the Kassites, the Elamites again asserted themselves. At the beginning of the twelfth century B.C. an Elamite prince was placed on the throne of Babylon. Towards the close of that century the power of Susa reached its zenith in the reign of Shilak-Inshushinak, the greatest of all the kings of Elam, who carried his arms from the Tigris to Persepolis. But with the death of that monarch the glory of Elam departed for ever. New enemies had already become dominant in north Iran. They were the Medes and the Persians.

#### THE COMING OF THE INDO-IRANIANS—MEDES AND PERSIANS

While the Semites were building up their early empire in Babylon, the Indo-Iranians were feeding their flocks somewhere on the south-east of the Caspian. In the third millennium B.C. the Indo-Iranians began to pass through eastern Iran towards India. It seems that during that period several branches became detached from the main body. One such branch advanced westward and established a kingdom in upper Mesopotamia. They were as we have already said, the Mitannis. A second branch settled down on the north-western plateau of Iran and became known as the Medes. A third one, the Persians, occupied southern and eastern Iran.

We first hear of the Medes and Persians in the Bible. Their names also appear in the Assyrian annals of the ninth century B.C. (Salmanassar III 836-35 B.C.). The Assyrians, however, did not distinguish between these two tribes. It seems that civilization developed first among the people of Media (the modern province of Azerbaijan). The Medes

had their capital at Ecbatana (the modern Hamadan), and they came to prominence chiefly through their wars with Assyria, culminating in the sack of Nineveh in 612 B.C.

The Median supremacy was comparatively short-lived. In the sixth century B.C. the Persians began to come into prominence. Towards 550 or 549 B.C. Cyrus the Persian conquered the Medes and united the two tribes under him. It was no ordinary event in world history. So far Western Asia was being dominated mostly by the Sumerians and the Semites. Now, another great branch of the human race, the Indo-Indians, definitely entered the scene; and they were to rule over a vast empire comprising many peoples and kingdoms never before so united. This was possible because of two things. In the first place, the Persian kings had great powers of organization and administrative genius which set a model for later peoples. Secondly, the Persians had a fine religion which taught them love of truth as well as toleration and humane consideration. The effects of these qualities came as a relief to all after the brutality and vices of the Babylonian and Assyrian kings.

### THE PERSIAN EMPIRE

Cyrus claimed that he belonged to the house of Achaemenids, so called from their ancestor Achaemenes who probably ruled in Anshan or southern Elam as a vassal of the Medes. It was under the Achaemenid kings that the great Persian empire was created with a rapidity 'scarcely equalled except by Alexander the Great, and by the Arabs in the first generation after the death of Mohammad.' Here we need not go into the details of their conquests, but we must be familiar with the names of at least the first three Achaemenian kings: Cyrus, Cambyses and Darius I.

When Cyrus became king of Iran the world around him seemed prepared to receive his authority. Assyria had already perished. From its ashes had appeared the new Babylonian Empire, but that Empire's vitality had departed quietly with the death of Nebuchadnezzar. The Kingdom of Israel in Judah as well as other kingdoms of Syria had been wiped out. Egypt had ceased to exist as a military power, and for fighting purposes she was absolutely dependent on her unreliable foreign mercenaries. In the extreme west of Asia Minor Lydia was regarded as a power, but her strength was still untried. And to the west of Lydia the Hellenistic world was as yet unknown to the east except as a recruiting ground for the armies of Egypt.

After conquering the Medes and uniting the Iranian peoples under his sway, Cyrus first advanced towards Lydia. The Lydian king, Croesus, had formed an anti-Persian alliance with the kings of Babylon and Egypt, but before the allies could move their combined troops Cyrus swooped down upon Lydia, conquered the country and took Croesus prisoner. Shortly afterwards, the Persian troops turned southward and captured Babylon. Then, Cyrus added other Asiatic territories and extended his empire eastward as far as the Indus. He fell in battle while pursuing some nomad tribes in the north-eastern part of the empire.

Many legends gathered round the life and deeds of Cyrus. We may credit as much or as little of them as we please. But one fact remains, that Cyrus treated his fallen enemies with remarkable humanity. This made a tremendous impression on his contemporaries and popularised Persian rule, and also the religion which Cyrus professed.

Cyrus was followed by his son Cambyses who conquered Egypt (525 B.C.) and became its Pharaoh. He died suddenly on his way back to Persia where, during his absence, a revolt had been engineered by a pretender.

The next Persian ruler was Darius the Great (Darius I, 521-486 B.C.). Under Darius the Persian empire extended further eastward toward a considerable portion of Sind and the Punjab. Darius also led an expedition into Europe across a bridge of boats thrown over the Bosphorus. He crossed the Danube and entered the homeland of the Scythians who had been a menace to the Persian empire, but there he suffered what all armies have suffered in attempting to penetrate Russia. Supplies were cut off and only a wreck of the Persian army could struggle back to the Bosphorus. The only result of this expedition was the annexation of Thrace. Darius and after him, his son Xerxes made a great fleet with which they conquered the islands of the Aegean. This brought them into contact with the vigorous city-states of Greece. The story of the struggle between the Greeks and the Persians will be narrated in a later chapter.

### DARIUS THE ORGANIZER

During the first two years of his reign Darius had to deal with many disturbances. The Medes, Babylonians, Armenians, and Asiatic Greeks revolted to recover their independence. Even a section of the Persians tried to dethrone Darius in favour of a supposed grandson of Cyrus. Darius suppressed all these revolts, and he did very much more. He gave an efficient organization to the vast Persian empire stretching from the Indus to the Danube and the lands beyond the Nile.

Darius divided the empire into twenty-one provinces, each ruled by a governor, or *satrap*. A satrap governed his own province, but he had to pay a fixed annual tribute and furnish troops for the emperor. In each province there

were officers known as the "King's Eyes" or the "King's Ears", whose duty it was to detect and prevent rebellions. A network of roads leading from the capital to all parts of the empire helped to unite the empire and enabled those officials to travel with speed. For the despatch of official communication Darius improved upon the postal system of the Assyrians. The Greek historian, Herodotus, recorded the motto of the Persian postal service thus: 'Neither snow nor rain nor heat nor gloom of night stays those couriers from the swift completion of their official rounds'. The administration of justice and collection of taxes were just and fair. The borders of the empire were secured by the subjugation of mountain tribes, and by granting to the provinces considerable self-government.

The Persian armies were collected from various subject races and formed units of 10,000, each unit containing ten battalions of a thousand men. A huge navy was built up mostly of Phoenician and Greek ships, but it must be remembered that the strength of the Persian empire lay more in its efficient administration and liberal policy than in the strength of its army and navy.

Like the Persians, the Assyrians also had vast kingdoms, though the Assyrians had never been able to rule those kingdoms. They had been so fond of fighting and took such pleasure in murder and plunder that they had no time left for making good laws and looking after trade. The countries conquered by the Assyrians had always been rising in rebellion, and the Assyrian army had to conquer them again and again. In contrast with the Assyrians the Persians conducted their wars with humanity, avoiding unnecessary bloodshed and always respecting the religion, customs and laws of the subject races. For instance, King Darius in spite of his zeal for Zoroastrianism was tolerant to the Jews and built temples in honour of the gods in



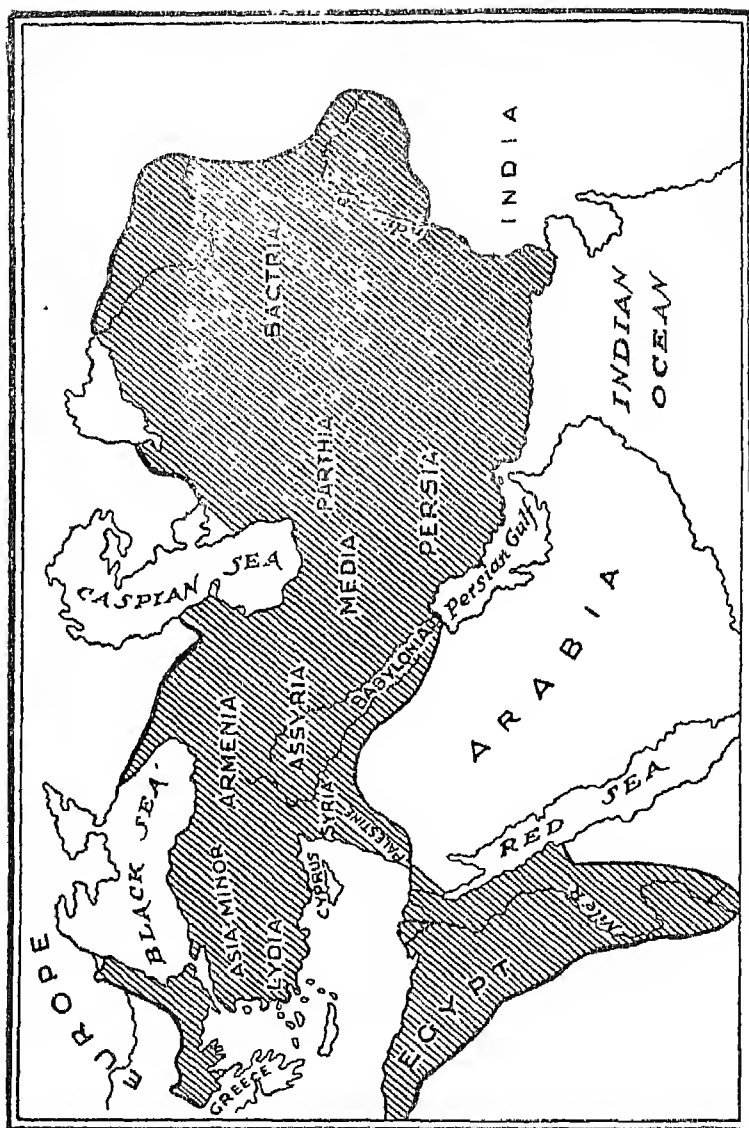


FIG. 9. THE PERSIAN EMPIRE ABOUT 500 B.C.

Egypt. He also pursued a similar policy towards the Greeks and other religious communities. As a result the Achaeminian empire continued undiminished for more than two hundred years. It was conquered by Alexander the Great in 330 B.C.

### ZOROASTRIANISM

The religion of the early Iranians was similar to that of the Vedic Indians. The worship of Mithra and Varuna, of the Asuras (Iranian Ahura) and the Devas, and the offering of the sacred drink Soma (Iranian *Haoma*) are common to the Aryans of India and Iran, and must date back to the time preceding their separation.

Then, began a great religious reform in Iran in the sixth century B.C. (which was a period of great changes in various other countries of the ancient world). It saw the extinction of political power in Mesopotamian kingdoms, the growth of the Republic in Rome and the expansion of the Persian empire leading to its first clash with the Greeks. It was in the sixth century that there were religious stirrings in India and China on account of the teachings of Buddha, Mahavira, Confucius, and Lao Tse. Again, it was in this century that Zoroastrianism began to guide the thoughts of Achaeminian kings and their subjects in Iran.

We cannot say definitely whether Zoroaster himself lived in the sixth century B.C., as very few items of information about his personality have come down to us. According to tradition, Zoroaster received his revelations from God, in the form of conversations, and they were handed down by his disciples to later generations, as were the Vedas, the Gospels, and the Quran. He taught that the world was controlled by two gods—Ahura Mazda or Ormuzd and Ahriman the Spirit of Evil. Zoroaster held

that life on earth was a ceaseless struggle between two forces. From such notions proceeded unity of worship and moral ideas. Man ought to adore the Good God and fight for Ilim for his own salvation and that of the world. Zoroaster's religion became the religion of nearly all the Persian people.

Long after Zoroaster's death his doctrine was reduced to writing; and it is now preserved in the *Zend-Avesta*, the sacred book of the Parsis. The priests of Zoroastrianism were called Magi. One of the rituals which the Magi taught was that men's corpses should be exposed to the air and not buried.

The Medo-Persian civilization was one of the most brilliant in the ancient world. At the root of this civilization lay the religion of Zoroaster. The historic importance of Zoroastrianism is apparent not only as the religion of the Persian Emperors but also on account of its influence on Judaism and Christianity. 'Both Judaism and Christianity have been immensely affected by Zoroastrian thought. Their doctrine of angels and devils and the idea that good and evil are equal and permanent adversaries are probably derived from this source. But apart from this, the Persian religion has undoubtedly contributed more than any other so-called heathen religion to acquaint the world with the great thought that the kingdom of God is a kingdom of righteousness and that it is the duty of every human being to work for its establishment here and now'.\*

Persian civilization was also based on the heritage of culture received from Assyrio-Babylonian tradition, just as the Roman civilization was based on the Greek. From the literary point of view, we need only mention the fact that the Persians borrowed cuneiform writings from the

\* Hoffman, *Sphere of Religion*, p. 100.

Babylonians, though with considerable simplification, for inscriptions on rocks and tombs, and adopted the Semitic language called Aramaic for official communication. Their great buildings and sculpture at Persepolis and Susa show Egyptian and Chaldeo-Assyrian influences. In short it may be said in the language of Grousset that in certain respects and setting aside moral factors, the capture of Nineveh by the Medes and of Babylon by the Persians was in some sense equivalent to a conquest of Iran by the ancient centres of Chaldeo-Assyrian civilization.

#### PERSIA UNDER THE PARTHIAN ARSACIDS

We shall read in a later chapter of the Greek hero, Alexander the great, who after completing the conquest of Asia Minor, Syria and Egypt, broke through the Persian resistance in the battle of Arbela and ended the Achaemenid dynasty. Though Alexander's personal triumph was short-lived, Hellenistic dynasties ruled Iran from 330 to about 250 B.C.

Not long after this date, the Parthian dynasty of the Arsacids, so named from its founder Arsaces, came to power in the north-east of Iran and soon restored the independence of the whole country. The Arsacids, like their contemporaries the Kushan sovereigns who reigned in Bactria and the basin of the Indus, were ardent friends of Hellenic culture, and during their reign of four centuries they almost completely 'hellenized' Iran. They employed Greek as the language of the court, patronized Greek literature and carried on the traditions of the Greek Seleucids, as their coinage shows. Though the Parthian rulers were somewhat inclined to the cult of Mithra, the unconquered Sun, they were tolerant in religious affairs. During their rule, Christianity entered into the Parthian

realm, and Mithraism went to the west and became the most popular religion among the Roman legions.

#### THE NEO-PERSIAN EMPIRE OF THE SASSANIDS (224-652 A.D.)

While Iran was being hellenized under the Arsacids there was at least one religion which remained the stronghold of Zoroastrianism. It was the province known to the Greeks as Persis (the modern Fars).

In the early years of the third century A.D. Fars passed into the hands of a powerful Mazdean priestly family called the Sassanid. In 226 A.D. Ardashi I of the Sassanid family revolted against Artabanus, the last of the Arsacid dynasty of Parthia, and killed him in a battle at Horinuz. He then declared himself as the Great King of the whole of Iran with the exception of Bactria which was still under the Kushans. The capitals of the Sassanids were Istakhar, to the north of the ancient Persopolis in Fars, and the city of Ctesiphon in Chaldea which had already been the capital of the Arsacids.

The Sassanids occupied the throne of Persia from 224 to 652 A.D. During this period they had to wage constant wars, in the west against the Romans and, afterwards, against the Byzantines, and in the east against the Huns, Mongols and Turks. The second king of the Sassanids took the Roman emperor Valerian prisoner and invaded Syria and Asia Minor; but he was driven back across the Euphrates by the Arab prince of Palmyra. Many of the succeeding Sassanid kings fought against the Romans over Mesopotamia and the eastern frontiers of Rome but without any decisive results. At the end of the Sassanid period Chosroes (also called Anushirvan the Just), the most illustrious member of the Sassanian dynasty fought against the white Huns and the armies of Justinian and added

## THE STORY OF ANCIENT IRAN

southern Arabia to his dominion during the boyhood of Prophet Muhammad. Chosroes II Parvez of the Sassanian dynasty further extended his dominion and almost succeeded in taking Constantinople.

The long series of wars which the Sassanids waged fatally weakened their man-power and material resources. This gave opportunity to a new enemy, the Arabs. Though the Arab advance was checked temporarily at the Battle of the Bridge, they continued to be aggressive and completed the conquest of Iran and its incorporation into the Caliphate after the death of Yezdigird III, the last of the Sassanian king (652 A.D.).

The Sassanids claimed to be the direct successors of Achaemenids. But whereas the Achaemenids borrowed largely, first from the Assyrio-Babylonian and later from the Hellenic civilization, Ardashir and his successors remained exclusively Iranian. Under their patronage the legends of the National Epic were collected and a new version of the Avesta was prepared. It is in this form that the Avesta has come down to us. The Sassanids attempted to restore Zoroastrianism which had been under the Parthians by introduction of new cults. One of such cults was Manichaenism, forwarded by Persian religious leader named Mani who sought to reconcile Zoroastrianism, Christianity, Buddhism and the Assyrian religions. The followers of Manichaenism made much of the contrast between spiritual and material things. They passed ascetic lives, and many of them regarded marriage as an evil. Though they were persecuted continually at the hands of the Zoroastrians and Christians, Manichaenism spread rapidly and found a home in Tibet.

## CHAPTER V

### CIVILIZATION IN INDIA

Until recently, it was customary to believe that civilization in India began with the coming of the Indo-Aryans sometime between 2000 and 1500 B.C. But the striking discoveries at Harappa in the Punjab and at Mohenjo-Daro in Sind have laid bare the remnants of a pre-Aryan Indian civilization which existed some two thousand years earlier. Who the people were who created that civilization (the Indus civilization, as it is called) cannot be definitely known. It is probable that they were a Dravidian or proto-Dravidian type of agricultural and trading people having a highly developed social organization with definite forms of religious worship. Their houses had beautiful doors, windows and paved floors, and their high accomplishment in town-planning with fine thoroughfares and excellent bathing and draining arrangements proves that they were long accustomed to urban life. Nowhere in antiquity had so high a degree of civic prosperity been reached at such an early date, and nowhere in the Ancient East was there a people who seem to have been less baited by princes, priests and war. The amazing absence of what may be properly called palaces and temples and the scarcity of weapons of offence attest this. Nowhere in antiquity had life appeared so ordered and secure'.

It is highly probable that the settlers of the Indus Valley had cultural and trading connections with the civilizations of Western Asia. Their painted pottery presents the closest

\* Starr—*Indus Valley Painted Pottery*, p. 6.

likeness to that of the Sumerians and Elamites. A large number of seals have been discovered at Mohenjo-Daro and Harappa similar to those found in pre-historic Asia west of the Indus. Though these seals have not yet been deciphered, they undoubtedly represent a written language.

The Indus civilization continued to about 2000 B.C. when it was perhaps destroyed by a race of invaders popularly known as the Indo-Aryans or Hindus.\* It seems that the new-comers had already made long migrations during which the physical and mental weaklings were exterminated. The survivors had unusual energy, initiative and gifts of leadership compared with the people around them. With these qualities they created one civilization and social structure out of the various elements of India's population and established it over the whole of the land.†

### THE EARLY INDO-ARYANS

Our knowledge of the Aryans who came to India is derived mainly from the Rig-Veda, the oldest Sanskrit text composed about 4000 years ago, some centuries prior to the related Gathas of the Avesta of Iran. European scholars first regarded Sanskrit as an obscure language, but towards the close of the eighteenth century Sir William Jones, a judge of the Supreme Court in Calcutta put forward the view that Sanskrit is related to Greek, Latin, German and Old Persian. This view is now accepted by the vast majority of scholars who have developed the idea of an original Indo-European language spoken by the Indo-Europeans in their original habitation. The language of the Rig-Veda makes

\* The term 'Hindu' is the Avestian or Old Persian form of the Sanskrit name of the river *Sindhu*. The Greeks turned it into 'Indo' and applied it to the territory and people of the eastern side of the 'Indos' or *Indus river*.

† K. M. Panikkar—*A Survey of Indian History*, p. 4.



the nearest approach to that original parent tongue, though it was not written down till about the eighth century B.C.

The Indo-Aryans were divided into many tribes composed of families, possessing large herds of cattle and engaged mostly in agriculture. They were frequently at war among themselves and with the surrounding non-Aryan tribes. The non-Aryan enemies were perhaps of several classes. One class comprised the Asuras who were a civilized people living in fortified towns (*puras*) and having considerable skill in engineering. The Aryans hated the non-Aryans chiefly because the latter did not worship the same deities that were worshipped by the Aryans who also introduced the ideas of racialism and colour. In spite of hatred and enmity however there are evidences even in Vedic literature to show that certain non-Aryan tribes were admitted into the Aryan community. The ethnic purity of the Indo-Aryan settlers was fictitious from the very beginning.

As regards the political organization of the Vedic Aryans, it appears that each tribe was ruled by a king whose duty it was to lead troops in war and protect his people from the attacks of enemies. Kingship was generally hereditary, though there are references to election by the people. Among the king's officials mention may be made of the *Senani* or Commander of the army, *Gramani* or Village chief, and *Purohita* or Priest. The Purohita, such as Viswamitra or Vasishta, played an important part in the management of the state and was the forerunner of Brahman Statesman such as Chanakya of the Maurya period. Besides these officials the king was helped by some popular organizations called *Samiti* and *Sabha*.

There were four classes among the Vedic-Aryans—the *Brahmans* or priests, the *Kshatriyas* or nobles and warriors, the *Vaisyas* or the commonalty including both farmers and artisans, and the *Sudras* or labourers. There was nothing

like the rigid institution which crystallized in later times into a *caste system*. Progressive segregation of the people into castes may be traced to the desire of the priests and nobles to perpetuate their social supremacy, by laying down that membership to their society is determined by birth and not by occupation. The rigidity of the caste-system continued through the ages.

What has been said above is not, however, the whole picture of the early life and society of the Hindus. In spite of social divisions and sub-divisions which became rigid in later times, the Hindu attitude to religion was very liberal from the beginning. In the first place, it had no fixed intellectual beliefs and dogmas, and it readily admitted other points of view as worthy of attention. Thus Hinduism is not only the religion of the Vedas but of the Epics and Puranas which, among other things, present the popular exposition of religious beliefs, worship and observances as opposed to what is strictly Vedic thought and teaching. Secondly, while the priests were making elaborate codes of rituals, another class called the *Rishis* or Sages went beyond all rituals in search of the reality. It is interesting to note that some of these *Rishis* were women, such as Visvavara, Apala, Ghosha, Gargi and Matreyi. They composed hymns in the Rig-Veda and devoted themselves to the problem of the origin of the world and of the eternal principles which maintain it. Such ideas were developed in later Vedic literature in the Upanishads which are still considered as repositories of the best thought of the best minds. The Upanishads embody the various religious experiences of the *Rishis* and are not, therefore, uniform in exposition. Nevertheless, they all insist on the ultimate unity of the universe and of an absolute reality amidst ceaseless movements and changes. The only way of understanding and realizing the unity and reality is to dive deep into what constitutes the

subjective nature of every one of us as an individual. 'Nowhere else is there a way of reaching the heart of things.'<sup>\*</sup>

Here we see for the first time a new aspect of civilization. Before the Aryans began their southward and eastward movements the peoples of Egypt and Mesopotamia had reached a high level of culture. It was however a material culture based on physical, economic and technical efficiency. The higher ideals of mind and spirit which can be attained by self-subordination and conquest of desire were almost excluded—at least the present imperfect knowledge of those peoples prevents our knowing anything of their achievement in that direction. Hinduism introduced new elements in man's outlook on the earthly life and the life beyond. It is interesting to observe how in two very different ways the Egyptians and the Hindus sought immortality. The Egyptians built pyramids where they preserved mummies so that the soul or rather the 'double' which inhabited the body might survive. The Hindus realized the immortal nature of the soul and left the legacy of their realization in the Upanishads. 'The contrast is interesting and instructive, and it not only indicates the true character of Indian civilization but its superiority over all that preceded it.'<sup>†</sup>

### JAINISM AND BUDDHISM

A remarkable tendency of the later Vedic period is the rivalry between the Brahmins and the Kshatriyas. By the sixth century B.C. this rivalry led to a revolt against priestly rituals and the caste-system as well as the authority of the Scriptures which supported them. The most prominent of such revolts were led by the Jains and the Buddhists. The Jains were the followers of Vardhamana Mahavira, who

<sup>\*</sup> (*Nanyah pantha vidyate yanaya*. Ch. Svet. Up. 6. 15.).

<sup>†</sup> R. C. Mazumdar—*Ancient Indian History and Culture*, p. 114.

elaborated the doctrines of an earlier prophet or Tirthankara named Parsvanatha. Mahavira denied the authority of the Vedas and enjoined five vows: to injure no life, to be truthful, not to steal, to possess no property and to observe chastity. Jainism never spread outside the boundaries of India.

The founder of Buddhism was Gautama Buddha. He was born in or about 563 B.C. near the ancient town of Kapilavastu in the terai region of South Nepal. In his childhood he showed an inclination to retire from the world. So his father, the king of the Sakya tribe, got him married early and endeavoured to keep from him such 'signs' as might move him to enter upon the life of an ascetic. But on successive occasions Gautama was confronted with those signs—an old man, a diseased person and a dead body. Ultimately he renounced the world and became engaged in deep meditation under the Bo-tree at Uruvila, near Gaya. There he received the knowledge of escaping from the miseries of the world. In other words he became the Buddha or the Enlightened. He spent the remainder of his life in preaching the truth he had realized. He passed away at Kusinagara at the age of eighty (about 483 B.C.).

Though Buddhism has been driven out from the land of its birth, it still remains one of the greatest religions of the world comprising within its fold about one third of the human race.

### THE POLITICAL HISTORY OF INDIA

The political history of India before the birth of Jainism and Buddhism still remains meagre. It seems that from the beginning there were numerous political units, some with kings and some oligarchical. There were constant fights for overlordship among these petty states. The notable

instance of such a struggle is the *Battle of the Ten Kings* in which king Sudas won the victory and became paramount. Buddhist literature mentions the existence of sixteen kingdoms\* which were fighting and occasionally making diplomatic marital relations among themselves. Our knowledge of the political situation of North-western India became more precise towards the end of the sixth century (probably 518 B.C.) when Darius the Persian definitely included Gandhara (modern Peshwar) within his empire and sent his Greek admiral Skylax to explore the Indus.

The first great king who united all the kingdoms of Northern India (excluding the Indus valley which remained under Persia) under one rule was Mahapadma Nanda of Magadha. Alexander the Great did not dare to advance far beyond the Indus because of the mighty military strength of the Nanda Dynasty.

The Nandas were overthrown by Chandragupta who founded the Maurya dynasty and ruled northern India from Herat to the Ganges delta, with his capital at Pataliputra. Chandragupta defeated the Greek invader Seleucus Nicator and compelled him to make peace by ceding the eastern provinces of Alexander's empire. It has been said by an eminent Indian historian that 'the triumph of Chandragupta over Seleucus demonstrated the inherent weakness of the Hellenic armies when confronted with Indian skill and discipline'. The success of Chandragupta was due no less to the great statesmanship of his Brahmin minister Chanakya (also called Kautilya) than to his own military powers. Chanakya has left us a treatise called *Arthashastra* on state craft comparable to *The Prince* written by the

\* Kasi, Kosala, Anga, Magadha, the Viji confederation, the Malla country, Chedi, Vamsa or Vatsa, Kuru, Panchala, Matsya, Surasena, Asmaka, Avanti, Gandhara, Kanboja.

Florentine statesman Machiavelli in the beginning of the 16th century.

Greater than Chandragupta and one of the greatest kings of all times was Asoka, the third king of the Maurya dynasty, who ascended the throne about 274 B.C. (the precise year is uncertain). Asoka began with the aggressive imperialism of his predecessors, but he soon changed his mind by seeing the slaughter and bloodshed of his war against Kalinga. From that time his foreign policy was based on the theory of 'non-violence', which is now receiving the serious consideration of modern politicians to establish world-peace and good-will among nations. The Kalinga war of Asoka must be regarded as one of the momentous events in the history of the world.

Asoka was a Buddhist. In order to propagate the doctrine of Buddha he sent embassies to far off countries such as Syria, Egypt and even Macedonia. We have very little information about these missions, but the conversion of the king of Ceylon by the Buddhist missionaries led by Asoka's brother, Mahendra, stands as a historical fact. A second mission was afterwards led to Ceylon by Asoka's sister, Sanghamitra.

The Maurya empire during the reign of Asoka comprised the whole of Northern India, probably as far south as Mysore. This vast empire was ruled by provincial viceroys with their capitals at Takshasila (Taxila), Ujjain, and Tosali.

The history of Northern India after the fall of the Maurya dynasty remains obscure for many years. About the middle of the second century B.C. the Sakas, dislodged by Huns called Yuch-chi, invaded the Punjab and ousted the Greeks who had been reigning there. One of these Greek rulers Menander has left a name in India. Later, the Yuch-chi horde of Huns who had driven the Sakas out

of Bactria, themselves crossed the Hindukush and began to invade India. One of the Yuch-chi tribes, the Kushanas, ultimately became supreme over the others. The most celebrated of the Kushana kings was Kanishka who, from his capital at Purushapura (Peshwar), not only completed the conquest of north-western India but led an army across the Pamir to Kashgar, Yarkand and Khotan. Kanishka was a great patron of Buddhism, and he ranks with Asoka in popular fame not only in India but also in Central Asia and China.

A new imperial era in Indian history opens when Chandragupta I ascended the throne of Magadha as the founder of the Gupta Dynasty (320 or 321 A.D.). The Guptas, particularly Samudragupta, 'the Indian Napoleon', and his worthy son Chandragupta II Vikramaditya completed the conquest of Northern India (Aryavarta) and won glory by receiving tribute from the kings of Bengal, Assam, Nepal, Ujjain and Southern India. King Meghavanna of Ceylon sent presents to Samudragupta and, with his permission, founded a Buddhist Monastery at Gaya. Another Gupta emperor, Skandagupta, won a great victory over the Huns. This victory had far-reaching consequences on the history of the Western World. The Huns who had so long been advancing in the south now turned westwards and began to fall on eastern Europe. Skandagupta's victory, however, did not prevent the Huns from settling in different parts of north-western India.

Almost all the Gupta monarchs were patrons of poetry and music. Literary studies blossomed under the Guptas in the golden age of Classical Sanskrit. Samudragupta was not only a great conqueror but he was also a poet and musician. The famous poet and dramatist, Kalidasa, probably lived in the Court of Chandragupta II who is usually identified with King Vikramaditya of Indian legends.

Mention may also be made of Sudraka, the lexicographer Amarshimha, and the great Buddhist writers Vasubandhu and Dignaga. Great advancement was made in the art of medicine as well as in astronomy in which the names of Varahamihira and Aryabhatta stand foremost.

The Gupta empire began to decline from the 5th century A.D. The most notable event of this period which influenced the course of Indian History was the invasion by nomadic tribes known as the White Huns.

The last great Hindu empire-builder was Harshavardhana whose capital was at Thaneshwar. The empire of Harsha practically comprised the whole of northern India, but when he tried to extend his empire south of the Narbuda he received a serious check by the Chalukyas.

Harsha died in 647 A.D., and with his death we may conveniently close the story of ancient India.

### GREATER INDIA

There was a consensus of opinion among the historians of the last generation that owing to her natural boundaries and unique civilization India long remained aloof from the currents of world history. This view cannot be maintained any longer. The painful researches of scholars have brought to light the fact that from very early times India maintained an active contact by land and sea with the countries of the West and East.

There were two main routes connecting India with the outside world. One was the land route which ran from Western China to Turkestan and then turned southward over the Hindukush to the Kabul Valley. It was through this route that Buddhism found its way to China and through China to Korea and Japan. The other was the sea route which lay via Ceylon and the narrow straits between



Sumatra and the Malay Peninsula and across the Arabian Sea to Western Asia. The Indians took advantage of both these routes in order to spread their commerce and more so their culture.

We have already referred to the existence of trade relations between the Sumerians and the settlers of the Indus Valley. Later, we find the import of Indian luxuries to Rome via Alexandria, which was, at that time, one of the chief centres of commercial intercourse between the East and the West.

The intercourse of India with foreign countries by land was mainly religious and cultural. In the third century B.C. Asoka is believed to have sent envoys to Syria, Egypt and Greece. Through those pioneers Indians did not achieve any definite success in the West. In the East Asoka's missionaries converted the islands of Ceylon to Buddhism.

During the first five or six centuries of the Christian era the region now called Khotan and Transoxania was the meeting-place of Indians, Iranians, Turks and Chinese. It was perhaps from this place that Buddhism found its way into China during the reign of the Han dynasty (68 A.D.). In the fourth century A.D. Kumarajiva preached Buddhism in China. He was the son of an Indian who established himself at Koutcha in Eastern Turkestan and married the daughter of that country. He was taken prisoner by a Chinese expeditionary force and brought to China where he passed his time in translating a vast number of works, particularly those of Asvaghosa, Nagarjuna and Vasubandhu into Chinese. Following the example of Kumarajiva other monks from Gandhara went to China. The next great missionary who visited China was Gunavarman who was connected with the royal dynasty of Kapisa. Gunavarman refused the crown, went to Ceylon and then to Java. Ultimately a

Chinese emperor of the Sung dynasty who had heard of the saintliness of Gunavarman and wanted to make his acquaintance, brought the great missionary to China (431 A.D.). Gunavarman was given a magnificent monastery, the Jetavana Vihara, near the imperial palace where he died a few months later.

There was also active maritime intercourse between India and the islands of the Malay Archipelago. Two of the most important Indian ports on the eastern coast were Tamralipta (modern Tamluk in the Midnapore district) and Paloura or Dantapura in Kalinga. The voyages were mostly coastal; and occasionally there were direct voyages from Paloura to the east across the Indian Ocean. According to Javanese legends Aji Saka the chief minister of a Pandava king ruling at Hastina (Hastinapura) first civilized the island and gave it the name Java. Whatever the value of the legend may be they contain a vague reminiscence of what is undoubtedly a historical fact, viz., from the first century A.D. Indians systematically pursued a policy of colonization which led to the establishment of Hindu kingdoms in Annam, Cochin-China and the islands of the Pacific.

From what has been said above we may place the ancient Indians by the side of the Phoenicians and Greeks as in the first rank of nations of sailors and colonizers. In the words of Silvair Levi 'the people who carried across the ocean the civilization to Burma, Siam, Cambodge, Champa, Java, and through Java to Madagascar must have been expert sailors.' Indians succeeded in making an indelible stamp on the entire Mongolian race comprising one fourth of the population of the world. A knowledge of the history of ancient India is a necessary preface to Chinese history as Greek and Roman histories are an indispensable introduction to the study of the history of Europe. Nay, more. 'As time goes on it will be increasingly realized that a know-

ledge of the history and culture of India is essential to the foundation of a proper understanding of the origin and growth of Western civilization,"\*

\* Rawlinson—*The Legacy of India*, p. 37.

## CHAPTER VI

### ANCIENT CHINA

While the Semitics were ruling their empire in Mesopotamia and the Dravidians were building up their culture on the Indus Valley another distinct type of civilization was developing among the Mongolian peoples of China far away on the other side of Asia.

There has been much dispute as to whether Chinese civilization grew out of China itself or came, together with inhabitants, from outside. Some advance the theory that the Chinese migrated from Mesopotamia, some connect them with the ancient Egyptians, and a third view regards them as the descendants of the Stone Age tribes who came from the Tibetan plateau. There is still another view which makes a linguistic approach to the problem and maintains that Chinese civilization is indigenous, as the earliest records of the Chinese have no mention of any migration to a country which they have been occupying for thousands of years. It is useless to proceed with the controversy. Suffice it to say that civilization is no ready-made article of export capable of transfer from one country to another. On the contrary all civilizations are the product of the intermingling of races and their ideas; and the civilization of China is no exception to this general truth.

China can boast of a civilization as old as, if not older than, that of India and far older than that of Persia, Greece and Rome. The original makers of this civilization were a community of black-haired, dark-eyed and yellow-complexioned people on the banks of the Yellow River in the present province of Shen-si and Kan-suh in the north-

west of China. Gradually they extended their influence over the less advanced neighbouring tribes and absorbed them, perhaps not so much by military power as by cultural assimilation.

### INFLUENCE OF GEOGRAPHY

The civilization of China shows no break of continuity from the dawn of history down to the present time. What the Chinese had been thirty or forty centuries ago they were until the beginning of the twentieth century. This feature of Chinese civilization can be partially explained by geography. In the first place, 'China Proper' or 'the Eighteen Provinces' is a compact and thickly populated territory bounded on the west, north-west and south-west by deserts and lofty mountain ranges, and on the east by the Pacific. To these natural barriers the Chinese added the Great Wall extending fifteen hundred miles from the sea-shore east of Peking to Tibet. These obstacles prevented intimate contact between China and the ancient civilizations of India, Persia, Mesopotamia and Europe though there has been occasional mingling of blood with the warlike tribes of Mongolia and Manchuria, and some contribution from without, notably Buddhism. In the second place, the land of China is very fertile especially because of the deep deposits of soil swept in by the winds from the steppes of Central Asia. This, combined with adequate rainfall, produces abundant harvests without much labour of cultivation. China also contains a rich storehouse of copper, lead, tin, iron and other minerals. The people, therefore, remained content and in absolute segregation from alien thought. This situation helps us to understand the strength of the initial resistance of China when at long last, this ancient culture was brought into active contact

with the entirely different civilizations of nineteenth century Europe.

### ROYAL DYNASTIES IN ANCIENT CHINA

The Chinese look upon Fu Hsi (2852-2738 B.C.) as the first emperor in their national history. They regard him as having taught his people how to hunt, fish, and keep flocks, and substituted for the ancient knot-writing a kind of hieroglyphics. The next emperor was Shen Nung who invented agriculture, discovered the medicinal properties of plants and devised weights and measures. Shen Nung was followed by a number of rulers who, though more or less legendary figures, represent the gradual progress of Chinese civilization. The last of them was Yu who is held to have founded the Hsia dynasty (2205-1766 B.C.). The last ruler of the Hsia dynasty was Chieh. Chieh indulged in women and wine and found pleasure in oppressing the people. At last he was overthrown by T'ang who founded a new dynasty called the Shang or Yin. The Shang dynasty ruled for five and half centuries from 1766 to 1122 B.C. It would not perhaps be wrong to say that by the end of the Shang dynasty the Chinese acquired all arts for the necessities of life and possessed a social organization based on a high standard of morality.

The Shang dynasty was followed by the famous Chou dynasty. The founder of the new dynasty was Wu-Wang, a man of uncommon ability, who became famous for his important reforms for the organization of schools and infirmaries for the aged. The weaker Chou rulers who came after Wu-Wang could not hold the empire together, and China gradually became divided into a number of feudal states much like western Europe during the early Middle Ages. Between the eighth and third centuries B.C. there

were in the Huangho and Yangtze valleys several thousand small states striving for hegemony amidst incessant wars. A period of confusion followed until a new dynasty called the Ch'in dynasty was founded by the self-styled 'First Emperor' Shih Huang Ti. In ten years of his reign he built the Great Wall (which had perhaps already existed in part) against the Huns who used to make frequent raids into the settled lands of the empire. It is said that this emperor deliberately destroyed all the books and records, particularly the works of Confucius to which his enemies could appeal in support of conservatism and followed most thoroughly a policy of disarmament within his territory by melting down all weapons made of metal.

A few years after the death of Shih Huang Ti, the great dynasty of Han was established by a soldier of peasant origin, known as Liu Pang. The Han emperors ruled for four hundred years (200 B.C. to 200 A.D.). The Yuch-chi who founded the Kushan kingdom in North-western India (Punjab) paid tribute to China. Some Han emperors permitted the official introduction of Buddhism into their territory, first from Central Asia and later from India probably about the time of Christ. With conquests and organization came peace and prosperity. The caravan routes to the west were made safe and there was an exchange of goods between China, Central Asia and the Asiatic portion of the Hellenistic world. Literature and art flourished, and many of the Han emperors paid generously for beautiful copies of books. It was during this period that Szu-ma wrote the first substantial history of China.

For nearly four centuries following the end of the Han dynasty the Chinese empire was plunged into lawless disorder. It was a period of three kingdoms—Wei in the north, Wu in the central and lower part of the Yangtze valley, and Shu in the south. These kingdoms were constantly at war

with one other. Taking advantage of this disunion the Barbarian peoples established states in northern China, and the Yangtze river became for a time the boundary between them and the genuine Chinese states of the south. The Barbarians adopted Chinese culture, but they also modified it. There was a mingling of the native population with the invaders. The result of such mingling can still be traced in the physique and language of the people of North China as against those of the south. In spite of civil wars and disturbances Buddhism gained ground during this period and many of the Chinese monarchs accepted the new faith. Missionaries came in numbers. Many Chinese travellers also went on pilgrimage to the sacred Buddhist sites in India. The most famous of such Chinese travellers was Fa Hsien who lived for sometime in the court of the Guptas. Chinese art and literature were profoundly influenced by Buddhist ideas.

Order and union were once more achieved first under the Sui dynasty (589 A.D. to 618 A.D.) and then under the T'ang (618 to 907 A.D.). With the establishment of the T'ang dynasty we may conveniently close the ancient period of Chinese history.

#### THINKERS IN ANCIENT CHINA—CONFUCIUS

From early times China showed a marked development in thought. Three of the greatest Chinese teachers arose during the Chou and Ch'in periods. They were Laotse, Confucius and Mencius. Laotse the oldest of them, became the founder of Taoism. The principles of Taoism are set forth in a book *Tao Te'Ching* which contains excellent ideals and admirable ethical maxims. But the Taoist disdain of worldly things, left no room for action and was not suitable for the ordinary run of men. Laotse's followers



soon forgot his teachings which later became mixed up with Chinese Buddhism.

The most distinguished of the Chinese philosophers of ancient times was Confucius or K'ung Ch'iu (551-479 B.C.). Confucius passed his early years in poverty. Nevertheless, he was carefully educated and trained in the highest ideals of China. In spite of war and tumult all around, Confucius believed in the essential goodness of man's nature and went about preaching peace and allegiance to the ancient laws. When asked about good government he said, 'It is simply the maintenance of natural relations which ought to exist between man and man: a combination of princely conduct in the ruler, loyalty in the subject, paternal love in the parent, filial piety in the child'.\* On another occasion his reply to the question as to whether the criminals should be beheaded was: 'Sir, what need is there of the death penalty in your system of government? If you showed a sincere desire to be good, your people will likewise be good. The virtue of the prince is like unto wind; that of the people like unto grass. For it is the nature of grass to bend when the wind blows upon it.'† It was during this period of his life that Confucius collected and edited the Chinese 'Classics,' with which his name has ever since been associated. These were mainly works of pre-Confucian origin and comprised Books of (1) *Changes*, (2) *History*, (3) *Poetry*, (4) *Rites*, (5) *Spring and Autumn Annals*. No inspiration was claimed for them; but the Chinese treat them with as much reverence as the Hindus, Christians, and Moslems show to their respective scriptures.

In his fifty-second year Confucius entered public life as chief magistrate of the town of Fu. Then he became the

\* Hanna—*Eastern Asia*, p. 27.

† Quoted from Sheppard and Morris—*Outline of History*, Part 1, p. 132.

minister of justice for the whole of Fu. He served so efficiently that the laws against crime fell into disuse, because there were now no criminals. After this brief experience as a practical statesman, Confucius resigned office and passed many years in travels from court to court throughout China. His last days were passed in literary pursuits, surrounded by a band of faithful disciples. He died in 497 B.C. at the age of seventy-three and then went through the same process of deification as occurred in the case of Gautama Buddha.

The teachings of Confucius can hardly be described as forming part of a religious system. They only form a system of morality. He did not discuss the future life with his followers but sought to save society by a return to the ancient ways of China. Special emphasis was placed upon ethics, moral education and ceremonies. In other words, he followed the path of least resistance by appealing to those views which had been current in China ages before him. This is perhaps the reason why Confucianism has not yet lost its hold upon the popular mind in China.

The most renowned follower of Confucius was his great disciple Mencius (372-289 B.C.). Mencius devoted himself to the defence of Confucianism against opposing doctrines. His teachings were, however, mainly political and economic in character. He expressed the view that the state exists only for the benefit of the people who must not be burdened with forced labour and heavy taxes. He even went to the length of supporting rebellion against tyranny. For these and other reasons Mencius is more popular with the 'Chinese Republic' than the more conservative Confucius.

#### CHINESE ACHIEVEMENTS IN THE PRACTICAL ARTS

Chinese civilization was well advanced not only in the realm of thought but in many practical arts also. Even

before the end of the Chou dynasty, agriculture was improved by irrigation and the regular division of lands. It was during the Han period that the Chinese accidentally discovered tea while they were searching for herbs in the mountains. There were skilled workers in gold, silver and iron and in the art of casting bronze they reached a high degree of excellence. Silk-weaving seems to have been widely known and bales of Chinese silk went westward as far as Tyre to be dyed and shipped to the wealthy centres of the Roman Empire. Like the ancient Egyptians, the Chinese used characters which were originally pictures, as of men, birds, horses, etc. Later on, two or more characters were combined to express an abstract idea. Up to the present time Chinese script has remained ideographic. It is just like mathematical signs which are independent of pronunciation, and because of this characteristic, Leibnitz, the mathematician, saw in Chinese script the best universal medium for scientific thought.

By 1000 B.C. the written language of China was already highly developed, being much the same as we find it today. The *Books* consisted of thin slips of wood or bamboo, on which the characters were written by means of a pencil of wood or bamboo, slightly frayed at the end, so as to pick up a coloured liquid and transfer it to the tablets as required. Later in Chinese history, silk paper was also used. It is generally believed that the Chinese were the first to invent the mariner's compass and printing. Gun powder was known in China from very early times and it was used chiefly for fireworks. Old Chinese guns are far more useful for saluting than for killing an enemy. However all these and other inventions had no continuous development. This has ever been the case with the institutions of the conservative East, and constitutes their fundamental difference to that of the restless West.

## CHAPTER VII

### CIVILIZATION REACHES EUROPE\*—EARLY GREECE

In the previous chapters we have made a brief survey of the earliest civilizations of Egypt and Asia. It is now necessary to see how civilization had its birth and growth in Europe.

It should be understood at the outset that both in the matter of geography and of race there is no recognized division between Asia and Europe. Europe may be considered as the western extension of the vast continent called Eurasia. The border-lines of Europe and Asia blend so imperceptibly that it is impossible to say where the one ends and the other begins. Similarly, the dominant races of Europe are nearly all of Asiatic origin deriving their blood from successive waves of invasion and colonization from the East. The Aryans of Great Britain and the Aryans of India, for example, are descended from the same stock, and the languages spoken by the English, French and Germans are akin to Sanskrit and Persian. In fact, from the beginning of history the west has borrowed from the east, and the east from the west; and the intermixture has been so complex and thorough that it is impossible to disentangle one element from another.

Nevertheless, it is true to say that there is a European civilization distinct and different in thought, custom and

\* The Phoenicians called Europe by the word *Ereb* which means 'Sunset', because it lay to the west where the sun always sets. Similarly, Asia was named by them as *Acu*, meaning 'Sunrise'. The Greeks borrowed these words from the Phoenicians and applied them respectively to the lands west and east of the Aegean.

social arrangements from those of the East. The origin of this civilization was in Greece. The modern European or western society has a relation with the ancient Greek society, which the other contemporary societies—those of Islam, India and China—have not. In the words of A. Toynbee\* it may be stated metaphorically that 'European civilization developed in the body of Greek society like a child in the womb', and next to Christianity the wisdom of the Greeks exercised the greatest influence in the shaping of this civilization. All that modern Europe has of literary and creative art, of scientific speculation and of political philosophy, had its beginnings in ancient Greece. Similarly, ideas of democracy and individual freedom which formed, as it were, the tissue of the social and political life of the city-states of Greece must be studied if one has to understand the organism known as European civilization.

But it should be remembered that the Greeks were not the first inhabitants of the region now known as Greece. There, they came into contact and finally absorbed an older civilization called the 'Aegean Civilization' which, in its turn, had been largely a product of Western Asia.

#### BACKGROUND OF GREEK HISTORY—A GRAECO-ORIENTAL WORLD—THE AEGEAN CIVILIZATION

'Aegean civilization' had its leading centre in Crete, the largest of the Aegean islands. This civilization, in its first phase, is called 'Minoan' from King Minos who had a splendid palace at Cnossus, the ancient capital of Crete. It might also be that the kings of Cnossus were called Minos, as the kings of ancient Egypt were called Pharaohs.

By 2500 B.C. the Cretans had already passed from the

\* *Legacy of Greece*, p. 293.

age of stone to the age of metal, and the whole island was perhaps unified under one ruler. Then followed a long period of peace and prosperity when remarkable developments were made in all the arts and luxuries of life. We find the remains of the royal council chamber with the throne on which the king once sat, fine wall paintings of men, women and landscapes, large halls with devices for light and air and with arrangements for the supply of water and draining, and female dresses which were astonishingly 'modern' in style. The most beautiful of the Cretan arts were perhaps pottery of many shapes decorated with plant and animal forms, which remains as admirable as mankind has ever produced. Another most noteworthy fact about the civilization of the Cretans is that they had a system of writing. Thousands of clay tablets with picture writing similar to the hieroglyphics of Egypt and 'linear' signs probably in imitation of the cuneiform writing of Babylon have been discovered—though these two forms of script have not yet been deciphered.

Aegean civilization differed in at least two ways from that of Egypt, Mesopotamia and India—it was not based on agriculture but on a busy sea-going trade and it was a culture that spread and not an empire that ruled. It is however probable that many features of Aegean civilization were borrowed from Egypt and Western Asia. In those days there was busy commercial intercourse in the Mediterranean, and the city of Cnossus acted for a time as the centre of exchange between the East and the West, playing the same part as Venice did many centuries afterwards. At the same time products of Aegean industries have been found not only in Egypt and Babylon but also as far west as Sicily, Italy and Spain. Traders and colonizers from Crete must have brought the products of their arts to the mainland of Greece where important centres of Cretan

culture grew up. One of such centres was Mycenae where the most striking remains of Aegean culture have been found. Hence the later phase of Aegean culture has been styled 'Mycenaean'. Mycenaean culture is the immediate precursor of the classical civilization on the mainland of Greece.

### THE EARLY OR HOMERIC GREEKS

About the fifteenth century B.C., civilization in the Aegean suffered an eclipse. Groups of warlike invaders (who were perhaps an Aryan people related to the Hindus and the Persians) came from the mountains of Asia or the steppes beyond the Caspian Sea and poured into Greece from the north or north-west regions of the Balkan peninsula. These northerners, the Achaeans as they are called, were at first nomads. Their most precious possessions were flocks of sheep and goats, which gave them milk, cheese and clothing. Gradually they took to agriculture, and then learnt the use of ships, conquered Crete and other Aegean islands and even ventured as far as Asia Minor and the Nile Delta. It was probably on one of these pillaging expeditions that they captured and destroyed Troy—an event which impressed them so deeply that it became the theme of legends and epic stories.

The period of Greek history down to 700 B.C. is mainly legendary. It is sometimes called the Heroic or Homeric Age because many features of the civilization of this Age are reflected in the two epic poems, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, popularly believed to have been written by a blind poet named Homer, who lived in the ninth century B.C. The *Iliad* tells of the siege and destruction of the city of Troy by the Achaeans for avenging the wrong done by the Trojan prince Paris, who carried off Helen, wife of Menelaus,

king of Sparta. Whatever the value of the legend might be, it was probable that Troy, being situated near the present site of Constantinople (Istanbul) controlled the sea and land-routes connecting Asia and Europe, and became immensely prosperous by trade, tolls and spoils of piratical raids. This prosperity might have led to friction between the Achaean cities of the Aegean. Homer's second epic, the *Odyssey* describes the adventures of the Greek hero, Odysseus on his return voyage from Troy. These two epics, committed to writing in the seventh century B.C., stand as the beginning of European literature.

The Greeks as described in the Homeric poems were a tall and fair people. They were in a transitional stage between the life of nomad shepherds and that of farmers who were beginning to settle down under their tribal leader or king. The king was at once the chief priest, the chief judge and the supreme war-lord of the tribe. He held his place so long as he could win victories in war. He was aided in governing by a Council of Elders. There was also a Gathering of all the freemen of the tribe who met when the king summoned them.

The ancient Greeks worshipped many gods, the most prominent of whom were Zeus, Apollo and Athena. The gods, though immortal, had human defects. Mount Olympus was their home, but they often visited the earth and mingled with men. An important religious institution was perhaps the *Oracle*. There was a wide-spread belief that it was possible to get communications from the gods through inspired persons at places called Oracles. The responses there received were also so called. The Oracle of Apollo at Delphi in Phocis enjoyed the utmost veneration and gained world-wide fame. The belief in the Oracles of Delphi continued even in historic times; and not only the Greeks but the Romans and monarchs of Asia consulted



the Delphic Oracle before undertaking serious state business. The reply, however, which came through the Pythia or prophetess of Apollo was often vague and ambiguous.

The last two or three centuries of the Heroic Age was perhaps a period of confusion and fighting when several distinct waves of invaders swept over Greeks. One group, the Dorians who had learned to use iron weapons, made themselves masters of southern Greece (1000 B.C.). Their defeated kinsmen, who called themselves Ionians, naturally sought refuge on the islands of the Aegean Sea and the coast of Asia Minor. Next, there were also the Aeolians who came from Thessaly and Boeotia and settled in the island of Lesbos and the adjoining mainland.

### THE GEOGRAPHICAL FACTORS IN GREEK HISTORY

Before we proceed further to narrate the story of the people whom we call Greeks (but who called themselves *Hellenes*), we must study the geographical conditions of the mainland of Greece. Such a study will help us to understand the ways in which political and social life developed amongst its people. In the first place, Greece is a land of mountains. A central chain—the Pindus—runs through the centre of the country and covers it with its branches like ribs from a backbone. The summits of these branches are not very high but they are peculiarly wild and rugged, rising steeply from flat plains and dividing like walls one level area from another. These areas became the home of a great number of small independent city-states, each living a life apart from its neighbours and having its own laws, constitution and armies. The Greeks were warmly attached to their respective city-states with strong sentiments of local patriotism.

In the second place, Greece is a land of shores. It is a

peninsula washed by the Adriatic, the Mediterranean and the Aegean. The arms of these seas run up to the heart of the land, creating numerous gulfs and good harbours. In fact, the coasts of Greece are so much broken that no part of the land is more than forty miles from the nearest sea. At one point Greece is almost split into two parts by the Corinthian Gulf on the west and the Saronic Gulf on the east. It is easy to see how the presence of the seas and fine harbours made sailors of the ancient Greeks, and how the character of the Aegean Sea determined the way in which the activity of Greek sailors were principally directed. The Aegean is studded with countless islands, and its atmosphere is calm and favourable for those who navigate by the eye with small ships. From Greece to Asia Minor the islands are placed like stepping-stones, and on a clear day the mariner always has the land in view. Thus, the people of the eastern coast of Greece were naturally drawn to the civilized East.

Thirdly, the climate of Greece is mild and bracing. Men are not melted with heat or stiffened with cold. This promoted the vigour and energy of the people and enabled them to live an open air life which was free from the paralyzing control of priestcraft and religion. At no time of Greek history were there great wars on religious issues.\*

#### GREEK TRADE AND COLONIZATION

The Greeks turned to trade and colonization from very early times. Their chief rivals in these spheres were the Phoenicians, the rich merchants of Tyre and Sidon. But from the ninth century B.C. the Greeks were able to outstrip their Phoenician rivals and acquire trade supremacy in the

\* Fisher—*History of Europe*, p. 19.

Eastern Mediterranean. The Phoenicians continued to control the western Mediterranean for some centuries more from their colony at Carthage on the north coast of Africa.

It must be understood that the expansion of the Greeks was favoured by Geographical and climatic conditions. In the first place, the soil of the mainland of Greece is by no means rich and fruitful, so the people had to work hard for all their needs. As the population began to increase means of livelihood became still more difficult in the mother country and the Greeks set out in search of richer lands beyond the seas. There were other causes which helped Greek colonization. Thousands of Greeks left their country, like the Puritans of the Stuart period, in order to avoid the tyranny of a king or noble and to join in the foundation of a new *polis* (city-state) where they might have more freedom than they had at home. Others set out for colonization in order to find a market for their trade and to ensure a supply of grain. Pre-eminent among these were the inhabitants of Miletus who founded over seventy cities, and those of Chalcis whose colony of Cumae was the oldest Greek settlement in Southern Italy. By 600 B.C. the Greek colonists fairly dotted the whole of the Mediterranean world, and spread eastward as far as the shores of the Euxine (Black Sea). There were so many Greek cities in Southern Italy that this region came to be called Magna Grecia or Greater Greece. The richest of the Greek colonies in Southern Italy was Tarentum, which is now called Tarento. In Sicily, the Greek colony of Syracuse planted by the Corinthians attained great fame and power. The westernmost Greek colony of that time was Massilia, modern Marseilles. Among the colonies of the north, Byzantium was the most famous. All these settlements were conveniently called Hellas. Thus, Hellas was not a single continuous country but it was composed of Greece proper as well as about one hundred

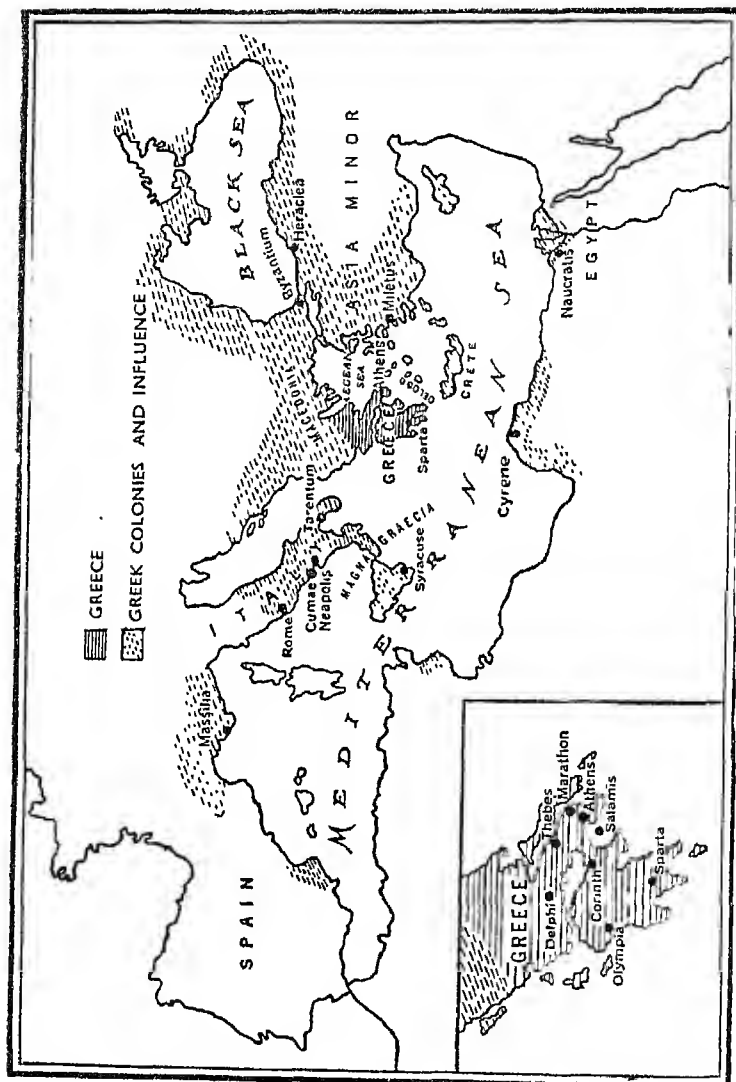


FIG. 10. THE GREEK WORLD.

and fifty separate and independent political units widely scattered over the area extending from the Pyrenees to the Caucasus and from Southern Russia to Northern Africa.

#### THE BONDS OF UNION: DELPHIC ORACLE AND OLYMPIC GAMES

There were no political bonds uniting the Greek colonies with their respective mother cities. In this respect there was a wide difference between Greek colonization and Roman. While the latter was always subject to the authority of the mother city, the former was completely free and independent, because the Greeks could not think one city as rightly ruling over another.

Nevertheless, the Greeks had something in common, their 'Greekness'.\* They believed that they all belonged to the same race. Wherever they went they retained their common customs, language and literature, and forms of worship of the same gods. All the Greeks consulted the oracles, venerated the shrine of Apollo at Delphi, and took part in the national athletic games. The most famous of such games were held every four years at Olympia in honour of Zeus and continued for five or six days. Competitions were in foot-racing, wrestling, boxing, chariot-racing and other feats. No one who was not of Greek blood and no one convicted of crime could join in the contests. The winner was given a simple garland of sacred olive leaves; but to win this honour was the highest ambition of every Greek. From far and near men travelled to this great festival, where they met one another and became conscious of common Hellenic sentiments and culture.

In spite of these bonds of union, the Greeks could not form a united nation. Sometimes leagues were formed when some common danger from outside, such as the

\* What they themselves called 'Hellenism'.

Persian invasion, threatened all of them, but these leagues were only temporary—‘unions of interest and sympathy and not of coalescence’. Ancient Greece remained to the end of its free existence a patchwork of numerous independent city-states, with the result that most of them fell an easy victim, first, to Persia, and then to Macedon, and finally to Rome.

### GREEK CITY STATES—SPARTA AND ATHENS

We have already said that the geographical conditions of Greece, its mountains and seas, formed a great factor in the creation of innumerable cities. We may conveniently fix our attention on two of these city-states which represented two different phases of Greek life and had the principal place in Greek history. These were Sparta and Athens.

### THE SPARTANS

When the Dorian invaders from the north settled in the Peloponnesus on southern peninsula of Greece, they bore the name of Lacedaemonians. In the course of time a city-state grew up in the midst of the Lacedaemonian communities and won dominion over the rest. This city which was in the province of Laconia was called Sparta. The Spartans dominated the two other classes in Laconia, the Perioeci, that is, ‘dwellers round about’ and the Helots or serfs.

The Perioeci and the Helots always despised the Spartans and the number of these two oppressed classes was many times more numerous than that of their masters. These discontented classes, always ready to revolt, were a constant source of danger to the Spartans. This led to the adoption of certain ‘Laws’ commonly ascribed to Lycurgus\*, which

\* ‘The grounds for believing that a Spartan lawgiver named Lycurgus ever existed are of the slenderest kind’.—Bury.

transformed Sparta into an 'armed camp'. The whole life of a Spartan citizen was meant for the service of the state. The newly-born infant was brought before a council; if it was found weak or deformed it was exposed on a mountain and left to die. The boy who was permitted to grow up was taken from his parents at the age of seven. He lived in a training camp, whose simplicity and severe discipline were designed to make him a perfect fighting man. He ate little and had a very plain diet. He went bare-footed wearing a single garment till it was worn out. At the feast of Artemis, the goddess of war, he was beaten before the statue of the goddess till the blood flowed. At twenty the Spartan became a soldier and was permitted to marry, but he could not enjoy home life. He had to live in 'barracks' and remain a soldier until he was sixty. The Spartan girl was also trained in much the same manner, and she became the healthiest and bravest woman in Greece.

The grim and grinding Spartan system produced the most efficient army in Greece; but it was at the sacrifice of home-life, commerce and cultural development. The town of Sparta resembled a military barrack taking no account of private tastes and inclinations. The training of the Spartans made them hard and merciless. They had no permanent contribution to make to the arts of peace or to human progress. This proves that men must seek excellence through the proper cultivation of the mind rather than through brute force.

#### ATHENS

Despite its pre-eminent military position most of the Greek city-states did not imitate Sparta. The Greeks, though they varied largely in temper and traditions, were essentially a people who loved literature, art, science and

philosophy and highly valued freedom of thought and democracy. For the achievements in such things we have to turn to the Athenians, the chief rivals of the Spartans.

The city of Athens is in the province of Attica. In pre-historic times Attica was filled with a number of independent communities, each of which had its own king and its own government. Later on these communities united under one king, the King of Athens, and began to worship one and the same protecting goddess, Athena, the divinity of Athens. Henceforth a man was an Athenian citizen, no matter in what part of Attica he lived.

By the beginning of the seventh century B.C. the kingly power in Athens was curtailed, first by the institution of a polemarch or commander of the army and then by the establishment of a Board of nine Archons (of whom the king was one), elected by the nobles. Thus, the executive was in the hands of three classes of officers—the *archons*, the *king* and the *polemarch*. Besides these, there was the Council of the *Areopagus* as well as an Assembly of the People called *Ecclesia*. The former had important administrative powers and acted as a supreme court while the latter though seldom consulted, proved itself to be the seed of a later developed democracy.

#### TRIUMPH OF ATHENIAN DEMOCRACY—SOLON AND CLEISTHENES

'The first step towards Athenian democracy was taken by a noble named Draco who drew up a code of laws which were written down for the knowledge of all people. Draco's code did nothing to relieve the sufferings of the poor debtors. Clamours for reform continued and a revolution seemed certain among the landless farmers when a more thorough-going reform was instituted by a popular leader named Solon, the wisest man of his time.



The reforms of Solon made an important step toward the establishment of Athenian democracy. They were social and economic as well as political. Solon put an end once and for all to the wickedness of using human flesh and blood as security for debt, by making such contracts illegal. He also cancelled all existing debts, and those who were enslaved for debt were restored to freedom. The other side of Solon's work was to make changes in the political constitution of Athens. In the first place, he modified the existing constitution by giving a share of political rights to all the four classes into which the people were divided. For instance, even the fourth and poorest class, the *thetes*, got the right of voting in the Ecclesia, and so took part in the election of the magistrates. Secondly, the *thetes*, were admitted on equal terms to the new law courts called *Heliaea* which Solon instituted. These courts had judges selected out of the body of the people, who not only gave their verdict as jurors do, but pronounced sentences as well. By these two measures the appointment of magistrates and the control of their conduct were largely in the hands of the common people.

But Athens was not yet ready for real democracy. Rivalry between aristocrats and workers continued, until the disorders of the times enabled Pisistratus to make himself master of Athens and rule as 'tyrant' or dictator for about 30 years. By the term 'tyrant' the Greeks did not mean one who ruled his subjects cruelly but simply one who seized the sovereign power by violence and who had no royal ancestry. Some tyrants were good men and able rulers; and Pisistratus was one of them. He was popular with the common people whose political cause he represented, and he encouraged agriculture, industry and the arts. Pisistratus' death was followed by a period of civil war. At last, Athens was freed from the arbitrary rule of one man

and became a democracy again under the leadership of Solon's nephew Cleisthenes.

Cleisthenes carried still further the democratic reforms begun by Draco and Solon. The machinery of Athenian democracy devised by Solon left scope for the clash of clan interests and local interests; and as a matter of fact particular groups gained undue political influence. For the four ancient tribes depending on birth, Cleisthenes cleverly substituted ten new tribes or *demes* on a territorial basis entirely artificial. By this means he was able to confer citizenship on many members of the poor classes of Athens, who were so long excluded from the tribes on account of low birth. Cleisthenes created a Council of Five Hundred, fifty from each of the ten new tribes. The members were appointed by lot out of a number of candidates elected by the *demes*. This Council became henceforth the supreme power to administer the laws and control the magistrates. The military system also was reorganized by placing the army under the control of a popularly elected Board of ten Generals. Both the Council and the Generals were responsible to the Ecclesia. These measures marked the introduction of real democracy in Athens.

To safeguard his new democracy Cleisthenes introduced a curious custom known as *ostracism*. It provided that at certain intervals people should be invited to record an opinion as to whether any political leader who seemed dangerous to the state should be exiled or not. Any citizen who pleased might take an 'Ostrakon' (oyster shell) to record his vote on it. When six thousand votes were registered the person whose name was written on the greatest number of shells was ordered to leave the country for ten years. Ostracism was thus a clever means of getting rid of tyrants and dangerous party leaders.

Such was the constitution which Athens reached by the

end of the sixth century B.C. It was a *direct* democracy in which all the citizens assembled and took part in the making of laws, in contrast to the modern democracy where representatives of the people are elected to act as law-makers.\*

The Spartans who clung to a narrow military despotism, became jealous of the Athenian constitution. They tried to overthrow it by inviting an Athenian party leader named Hippias, but the attempt was unsuccessful. Hippias fled away to Persia to seek the help of King Darius who, after conquering Lydia had been ready to settle accounts with the Greeks.

\* Athenian constitution became still more democratic at the time of Pericles.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE STRUGGLE OF GREECE WITH PERSIA--THE ATHENIAN EMPIRE

While the Greeks were completing the organization of their city-states, the Persian king was conquering, one after another, all the nations of the East, to form a single empire. Suddenly in 546 B.C. Croesus the Lydian was overthrown by Cyrus the Persian; and soon after the disappearance of Lydia which acted as a buffer state the rich and populous Ionian Greek colonies on the West coast of Asia Minor were subdued and made subject to Cyrus.

Some thirty years later the Ionian\* Greeks of Asia Minor revolted against Cyrus' son Darius; and the Athenians sent a small expedition to help them. The Greeks took the Persian city of Sardis by surprise and burnt it, but Darius soon revenged himself by destroying the Greek cities of Asia Minor; and the action of the Athenians turned his anger against Greece itself. It is said that the Great King ordered one of his officers to repeat to him at every meal 'Master, remember the Athenians'. The desire to punish Athens was not the only cause for the Persian attack on Greece. The Persian Empire had included all of Western Asia and Egypt, and naturally it now looked to Europe for further expansion. The Greeks too found their sparse land too poor to support an increasing population, and they began to search for new fertile areas. So a clash between these two expanding imperialisms, Persian and Greek, appeared to be inevitable.

#### THE STRUGGLE OF GREECE WITH PERSIA

The fifth century B.C. opened with a dangerous period for the Greeks. Darius, king of Persia, sent a huge army

into Europe in order to punish the Athenians, but it ended in shipwreck. Two years later, another expedition was sent against Athens, not by land but directly across the sea. The Persian soldiers landed in Attica and marched successfully to a place called Marathon about twenty-four miles to the north-east of Athens. Athens sent a swift runner to Sparta to seek aid. For two days and two nights he ran and covered a broken country of one hundred miles until he reached Sparta. But the superstitious Spartans told him that the gods did not want them to fight until the full moon, and it was still only the first quarter. So the Athenians had to fight alone. Led by Miltiades they attacked the Persian hosts on the plains of Marathon. The Greeks were outnumbered, but they were desperate men fighting for their homes and their liberty. They pressed on the Persians on each side like scissors and chased them to the edge of the sea. There the Persians suffered a frightful slaughter, and the remnants of their army sailed back to Asia. So ended the first Persian attack on Greece.

Ten years after Marathon, Persia struck again. In order to crush the Greeks Xerxes, son of Darius, collected a vast army from all parts of his empire and prepared a huge fleet manned by Phoenician sailors. It was resolved to attack Greece by land and sea, so the army crossed the Hellespont by a bridge of boats while the fleet followed along the coast. As the Persian host advanced many of the Greek states yielded to the demands of 'earth and water', the customary symbol of submission. Only Athens and Sparta prepared for a desperate resistance.

During the invasion of Darius the valour of the Athenian hoplites at Marathon saved Greece. This time also it was Athenian statesmanship which secured the unity of the Greek forces against the invader. Athens did not allow any opportunity to arise which might lead to domestic disputes. She

voluntarily accepted the command of Sparta both by land and sea, though she herself provided a larger number of ships than any other state. Leonidas, King of Sparta, became the leader of the confederate army, and Eurybiades, also a Spartan, was chosen commander of the confederate fleet. While the main Greek army built fortifications at the Isthmus of Corinth, Leonidas with a small force hastened northward to block the invaders at the narrow mountain pass of Thermopylae. For two days the handful of Greeks kept back the enemy, but at last a traitor showed the Persians a secret pathway. Attacked on both the sides, Leonidas and his Spartans fought until the last man fell.

After the battle of Thermopylae the Persians marched rapidly to Athens. But Athens was a deserted city. Xerxes ordered his soldiers to destroy Athens, and the city was burnt. In the same year the Greeks fought a naval battle at *Salamis* in which the fleet of the Persians suffered a complete disaster. In the next year followed the defeat of the Persian army at *Plataea* and the Persian fleet at *Mysale*. After these defeats Persia did not make any more serious attempts to conquer Greece.

### RESULTS OF THE PERSIAN WARS

The Persians were a highly civilized people. They had especially a great love of truth and a great religion, Zoroastrianism, which was much superior to what passed for religion among the Greeks of that time. Had the Persians been victorious, Greece would have profited at least in some respects by coming into closer contact with a superior type of civilization. But it would have been at the cost of her liberty. The victory of the Greeks marked the beginning of Greek supremacy over the Mediterranean, and of Athenian supremacy over the rest of the Greek city-

states. The real significance of the Greek victories lay not in the field of politics but in the field of spirit. A tiny people had defeated a great empire; and the valour of this

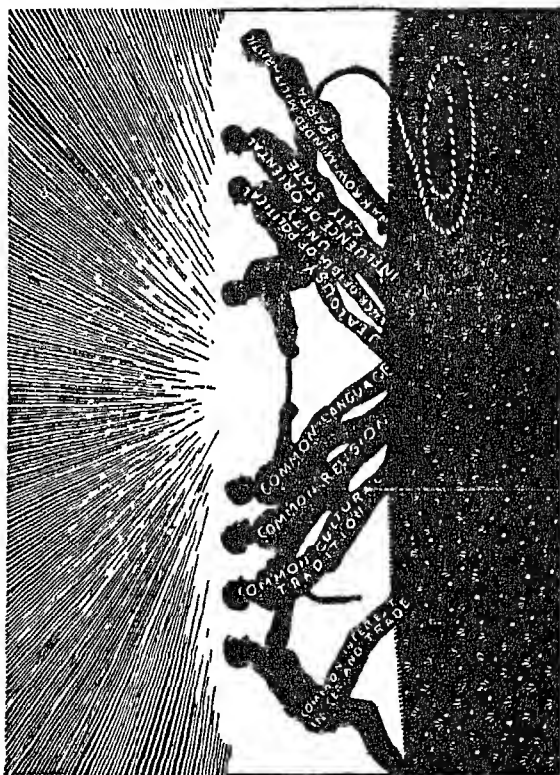


FIG. 11. STRUGGLE FOR GREEK UNITY.

tiny people at Marathon, Thermopylae, Plataea and Salamis filled the Greek mind with joy and exultation which found expression in splendid masterpieces of national literature and art, astonishing in their beauty and variety.

## THE CONFEDERACY OF DELOS AND THE ATHENIAN EMPIRE

After the Persian invasions the Athenians rebuilt their city which had been burnt by the enemy, and completed the erection of strong walls around a new and larger Athens and then followed a policy of Athenian progress and expansion. This policy was favoured by circumstances.

While the Athenians were rebuilding their city, important events took place in the Greek states of the Aegian and Asia Minor. After the battle of Mycale these states revolted and formed a league against the Persians. Now, the question arose as to what city should be the head of this league. It was Sparta's opportunity to profit by this situation because she had been the predominant power in continental Greece for the last forty years. But the Spartans were conservatives and unable to adapt themselves to new conditions. Moreover, the Spartans who were men of the mountains could not conduct a maritime war. In these circumstances the Asiatic Greeks placed themselves under the leadership of Athens. Thus was formed a league known as the Confederacy of Delos. The states about two hundred and sixty in number joined of their own free will; and it was arranged amicably what contribution each of them would make in men or ships or money to the common fund. The delegates of all the states met once a year in the sacred island of Delos where the common treasure chest was kept in the temple of Apollo.

The Delian League freed the Asiatic Greeks from the Persian yoke by many successful campaigns, though while the Greeks were gaining these victories, the character of the League was being transformed. At first the larger states agreed to furnish quotas of ships of men; the smaller, to make their contributions in money. As time went on, even the larger states found it more convenient to make payments



in money than to provide men and ships. The Athenians welcomed this commutation, for the money enabled them to build ships for themselves and increase their own navy. Thus they soon became powerful enough not to permit their allies to withdraw from the League as many of them had wanted to do when the danger of a renewed Persian invasion passed away. By 454 B.C. it seemed clear that what was originally an alliance of equal states had been transformed into an Athenian Empire. The allies had now become the subject states, and Athens the Imperial mistress who increased the tax on them and required their citizens to bring their cases before the Athenian courts. The treasury of the League was transferred from Delos to Athens, and the money was used in building Athenian ships and strong walls around Piræus, its sea-port. Later, Athens and Piræus were united by the Long Walls. Athens grew in size and strength and her empire embraced the whole of the Aegean Sea and more than 200 cities.

### THE AGE OF PERICLES

As a result of the conversion of the Delian League into the Athenian empire Athens reached the zenith of her greatness in government, social life and literature—a greatness which forms a landmark in the history of Europe. It was the 'Golden Age' of Athens, the Age of Pericles.

Pericles was an Athenian of noble birth, well educated in literature, philosophy and music, and an able commander in war. He wanted to make Athens the 'School of Hellas' in every respect. Never before had any people enjoyed such unrestricted liberty as the citizens of Athens did during the time of Pericles. By this time the Athenians came to believe that the service of the state did not require any special training or ability ; and every one must be given an

opportunity of making laws, holding public offices and administering justice. There was no representative system of government at that time. All the citizens—the *Demos*—met once or more often in a month in their place of assemblage, the *Pnyx*. The Assembly (known as *Ecclesia*) was the ultimate authority in deciding war and peace and in making laws and judicial trials. The *archons* still existed, but the real executive power was in the hands of the ten *Strategus* or generals (of whom Pericles was one). These *Strategus* were appointed from all the classes by the *Ecclesia*. Besides, there were a large number of officials who were elected by lot—a method which gave a chance to almost every citizen to hold some state office. Perhaps the most important of those who were elected by lot were the members of the popular law courts. Pericles also introduced a system of state pay which was extended later on to the citizens for attending the *Ecclesia*. This system enabled even the poor citizens to devote much time to public duties.

Pericles was an imperialist but as his ambition exceeded his strength he was obliged not to disturb the Persian King by land and sea. At the same time he secured for the Athenians unobstructed opportunity for commerce with Asia and Egypt, which promised larger returns than expensive wars. He made a Thirty Years' Peace with Sparta. Another important measure which he adopted to make the influence of Athens felt abroad was the settling of Athenian citizens far and wide, from the shores of the Euxine to the hills of Southern Italy. These colonies served as garrisons in the lands of subject allies, and at the same time relieved Athens of its superfluous population. These Periclean colonies were called *cleruchies*. It has to be observed that this policy, though popular at Athens was highly unpopular among the subject allies in whose territories the colonies were planted.

Athens, during the age of Pericles became a thing of beauty. A large sum of money levied as war taxes from the subject allies was spent in erecting beautiful edifices, the most beautiful of which was the temple, the Parthenon, within which was wrought by the sculptor Pheidias a colossal statue of Virgin Athena, the protecting goddess of the city. Athens became at the same time a city of poets, dramatists, philosophers and orators—some were Athenians by birth, others came from all corners of the Greek world. Among them we may mention the names of the dramatists, Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides and Aristophanes whose masterpieces were written for the honour of celebrating the festival of Dionysus, the God of Wine.

The Age of Pericles was a period of questioning. A class of people called Sophists came to Athens who professed to teach wisdom. They gathered many pupils and began to attack morals and religion and the constitution of Greek cities. Socrates (469-399 B.C.), an old man of Athens and the wisest of the Greeks undertook to combat the Sophists, but as he always spoke of morals and religion the Athenians took him for a dangerous Sophist and condemned him to death. Though Socrates left no written work, his personality and teaching attracted a famous group of disciples. The most ardent disciple of Socrates was Plato (427-347 B.C.) who constructed a profound system of philosophical thought. Plato's pupil was Aristotle (384-322 B.C.) the tutor of Alexander the Great. The Periclean Age also produced two great writers who laid the foundations of true history. Herodotus, who is known as the 'Father of History', wrote an extremely interesting account of the Persian Wars, while Thucydides wrote an impartial history of the Peloponnesian Wars in the hope that future generations might benefit from the experience of the past. Thus Athens reached the height of Hellenic civilization during

the Age of Pericles, and became, what Pericles himself said in a speech, 'the School of Hellas'.

## CHAPTER IX

### RIVALRY OF ATHENS AND SPARTA—THE PELOPONNESIAN WAR

The Athenian empire founded by Pericles enjoyed some years of glorious life. During this period she abused her position by oppressing and exploiting the weaker states. The result was that Sparta as a leader of the outraged states started a civil war known as the Peloponnesian war. The war continued for about thirty years, with the result that Athens was finally defeated, yielding her leadership to Sparta. Sparta however could not long enjoy her position. She was defeated in battle by the Theban leader Epaminondas. The hegemony of Thebes also was short-lived—it was destroyed by Macedon under the leadership of Philip.

Sparta was bitterly jealous of Athens. Both these states had fought side by side against the Persian invaders, and in the face of a common danger their friendship had seemed built for ever. But the tide turned in the fifty years following the victories of Salamis, Plataea and Mycale. During this period Athens not only became mistress of the Aegean, but under her leader Pericles she also began to dream of a western empire and to dominate south Italy, Sicily and the cities of the west coast of Greece, at least by trade and commerce if not by arms. This ambition was greatly resented by Sparta.

With this war atmosphere already existing, the immediate cause of the Peloponnesian war was that Athens interfered in a quarrel between Corinth and Corcyra, a colony of Corinth. When both parties appealed to Athens for assistance she found it in her interest to help Corcyra

because Corinth was already becoming her strong commercial rival in markets of the West. The Corinthians who were members of the Peloponnesian League applied to Sparta for help. Then Sparta sent an ultimatum to Athens the terms of which were impossible to accept like the terms of the Austrian ultimatum to Serbia before the outbreak of the First World War. Athens was willing to refer the matter to arbitration, but who would arbitrate? The whole of Greece was now divided into two hostile camps, and with the approval of the Delphic Oracle, Sparta declared war (431 B.C.).

Pericles who practically ruled Athens under the forms of the democracy faced the war with confidence. He knew that Athens was weak on land. His policy was to avoid a conflict in the open field and to force the enemy to sue for peace through exhaustion. So when the Spartans attacked Attica in 431 and 430 B.C. the Athenians took shelter behind their walls and allowed the invaders to burn their houses and destroy their corn-fields undisturbed. In the meantime the Athenian navy sailed round the Peloponnesus and inflicted damage on some coastal towns. But a more terrible enemy than the Spartans visited Athens in 430 B.C. A plague, like the Black Death in England in the fourteenth century, broke out within the walls and carried off at least one-fourth of the inhabitants. Pericles lost his two sons in the plague and he himself died about a year later from some obscure illness.

After the death of Pericles there was no one to continue his policy, that is, to avoid an open battle and to wear out the enemy. The control of Athenian policy now fell into the hands of a new type of politician who was liable to be carried away by the excitement of fighting a popular war to the finish. And so the war went on. Finally, both sides, being exhausted, peace was made in 421 B.C. on the basis of

the restoration of all conquests and captives. This peace is known as the *Peace of Nicias*, and it ended the first part of the Peloponnesian War.

But a fresh outbreak of the war became imminent when there arose in Athens a new leader of the *Demos*, Alcibiades by name, brilliant, imaginative and skilled in war and diplomacy, but restless and ambitious. Alcibiades saw that the Athenians could not stand up to the Spartan armies with any chance of success and so they must look outside the Peloponnesus for their next military adventure. Syracuse in Sicily was, at this time, the chief colony of Corinth, which was in turn a member of the Peloponnesian League. Alcibiades persuaded the Athenians to undertake an expedition against Syracuse in the hope that the conquest of this place would lead ultimately to the naval supremacy of Athens in the Western Mediterranean. Accordingly, a huge fleet with an army of about thirty thousand soldiers was sent against Sicily.

The Sicilian expedition however ended in complete failure on account of the foolishness of the Athenians. During the absence of Alcibiades his enemies at Athens accused him of the religious crime of mutilating certain ancient statues known as the *Hermæ*, and he was recalled for trial. Fearing a death sentence he fled to Sparta where they used his services against his mother country. In a great fight in the harbour of Syracuse the Athenian fleet was hopelessly beaten and all chance of escape by sea was gone. Then the miserable Athenian host tried to return by land but were completely annihilated. Thus ended the second part of the Peloponnesian War.

After the Sicilian disaster, the Athenians, with admirable energy and courage, kept up the struggle for nearly ten years. They recalled Alcibiades and gave him command of the army. Alcibiades gained some splendid victories for

Athens, but he could not undo the harm he had already done. Rebellion broke out among the island allies of Athens and they could no longer be coerced into obedience. A curious feature of this part of the war, was that Persia

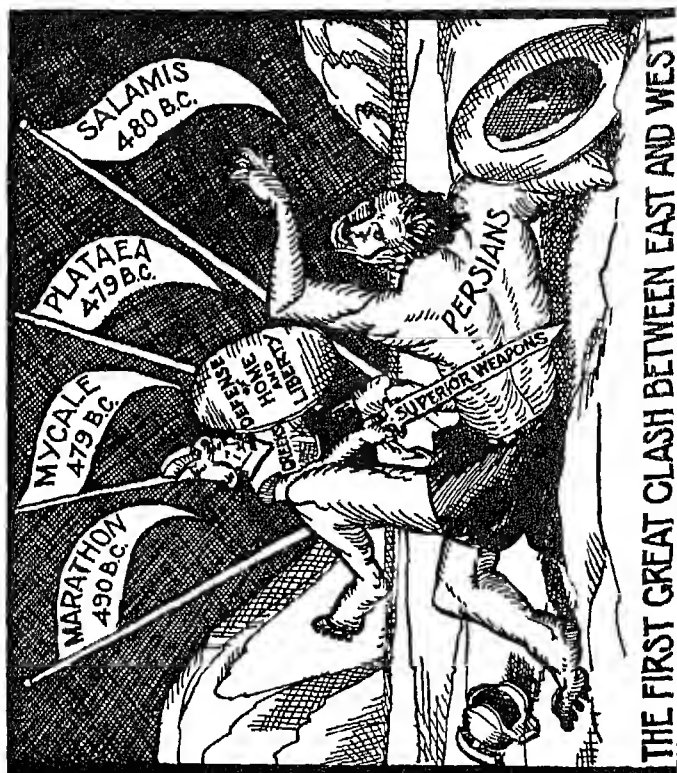


FIG. 57.

re-entered the war on the side of Sparta in order to gain her lost possessions and prestige on the coasts of Asia Minor. Athens now found herself cut off from all supply



of corn by sea ; she had to guard herself against Spartan invasion night and day ; and she could not do any farming except behind the walls. All the time internal dissensions continued. At that time on the Spartan side there was a great general named Lysander. He inflicted a crushing defeat on the Athenian army and fleet at *Aegospotami* on the Hellespont. This battle was followed by a blockade, and Athens surrendered after a long agony. Her long Walls and those of the Piræus were destroyed, all her war-ships were forfeited, her democracy was overthrown and replaced by an oligarchy, and she became an ally of Sparta pledged to follow Sparta's leadership.

#### RISE OF THEBES: EPAMINONDAS

The fall of Athens left Sparta supreme in Greece for one generation (404-371 B.C.). She now had an opportunity for unifying the Hellenic states as Rome afterwards did for Italy but the Spartan institutions and the Spartan character were not equal to the situation. Sparta continued to exercise a sort of tyranny over Athens and other Greek states. The result was that soon the city of Thebes rose as a powerful rival to Sparta. It was at that time that a general of first rate importance rose in Thebes. His name was Epaminondas. As the leader of the Thebans Epaminondas encountered a Spartan army near Leuctra and gained a complete victory. For the first time in the history of Sparta her army was outgeneralled and completely defeated. And as she had none of the elasticity of the Athenians she never recovered from this blow nor was she able to control the destinies of Greece again. But the Theban power was also short-lived. Sparta, Athens and other discontented states made an alliance and subverted all arrangements set up by Epaminondas. In 362 B.C. Epaminondas gained a victory over his enemies

in the battle of Mantinea. Unfortunately he himself was slain and his death led to the collapse of Theban supremacy.

Meanwhile a new power arose in the northern frontier—the kingdom of Macedon which succeeded in controlling the Greek states as they had never been controlled before.

## CHAPTER X

### RISE OF MACEDON—EMPIRE OF ALEXANDER THE GREAT

The Maccdonians were a rude agricultural people, half Greeks, and still living in the Homeric state of civilization, but when Philip, a former hostage of Thebes, occupied the throne of Macedon, the country leaped into prominence under his wise and vigorous leadership. While at Thebes Philip learnt the art of warfare from Epaminondas and formed an army which became a new thing in military history. He invented cavalry which combined with the light and the heavy armed infantry made an invincible army. With this new war equipment Philip expanded the boundaries of Macedonia eastward to the Aegean and northward to the Black Sea. He became ready now to satisfy a greater ambition, that of becoming the head of a Greek confederacy as Athens had been once. With his kingdom consolidated at home he marched his army into Greece and took possession of Thessaly. Even at this critical moment the Greek states could not face the enemy with a united front. It was upon Athens that the task of resisting Macedon chiefly fell mostly because her commercial and maritime interests were in danger. Even at Athens there were at least two parties. One party headed by Isocrates supported the cause of Philip in whom they saw the only means, of achieving unity, while the great orator Demosthenes leading the other party viewed the Macedonian invasion as a great menace comparable to the Persian invasion. Demosthenes used all his eloquence in a series of 'Phillipics' or speeches attacking the character and policy of the

Macedonian ruler, and thus roused a national feeling for resistance. Thebes and Athens gave up their rivalry and formed a defensive alliance; but Sparta and other Peloponnesian states kept aloof. In 346 B.C. the Greek forces met the Macedonians at Chaeronea, and though the Greeks fought bravely they were swept away by the Macedonian cavalry under Philip's son Alexander, afterwards known as Alexander the Great. The battle of Chaeronea ended the independence of Greece which never afterwards appeared except in an illusory form.

At Corinth soon after the battle of Chaeronea Philip invited a congress of all the Hellenistic states which accepted him as captain-general of all Greece to partake in a war against Persia. Philip, however, never lived to invade the Persian Empire. On the eve of his great expedition he was murdered (336 B.C.) by an assassin in the middle of his daughter's wedding festivities. The sceptre of Macedonia then passed to his young and able son Alexander.

### THE CAREER OF ALEXANDER THE GREAT

Alexander inherited his father's throne as well as his ambitions. He was then only twenty years of age, but he proved himself equal to the task of government. In his boyhood he came under certain influences which made a permanent impression upon his mind and character. He was taught by his mother to follow worthily in the footsteps of the great hero Achilles (of the *Illiad*) from whom he was said to have been descended. Philip also took great pains with his son's education. The noted Athenian philosopher, Aristotle, was secured as Alexander's tutor, while Philip himself supervised his military education. So it was possible for Alexander to readily take up his father's task of proceeding with the expedition against Persia.

In 334 B.C., that is, two years after he ascended the throne, Alexander led his matchless army across the Hellespont into Asia. The Persian Empire gathered all its forces and attempted to dispute the passage of the daring invader across the Granicus, but Alexander by his rare military genius, routed the Persians (334 B.C.) and freed the Ionian Greek cities from Persian control. Then the Macedonian host proceeded along the coast to reduce the Persian ports. At Issus he met an immense and unwieldy army under the Persian King Darius III. Darius was completely defeated and fled to his capital Susa to collect another army to oppose the invader. Alexander did not pursue Darius. After the surrender of Sidon and the storming and destruction of Tyre he turned his attention to the conquest of Syria and Egypt. In Egypt Alexander built the important city of Alexandria which in later time became a great centre of Greek culture. In 331 B.C. Alexander began his march to Babylon (Mesopotamia) by way of Tyre. On the plains of Arbela, he again met Darius and gained a decisive victory which left Alexander the undisputed master of the Persian Empire. The Persian cities, Babylon, Susa and Persepolis fell into his hands. Darius was again a fugitive, but he was killed shortly afterwards by one of his generals. Alexander spent about four years in conquering the wild tribes in the neighbourhood of the Caspian Sea and Afghanistan. Finally he made his way through the Khyber Pass to India, fought a great battle with an Indian king, Porus, and subdued northern India. Alexander desired to proceed to the plains of the Ganges, but his soldiers began to murmur. So he unwillingly gave orders to return.

Alexander returned to Babylon in 324 B.C. which he now chose as the capital of his vast empire extending from the Ionian Sea to the Indus. He now began to organize his

empire and to consider plans to conquer the Western Mediterranean. In the midst of his projects he fell ill after a bout of drinking and died in 323 B.C. in the thirty-second year of his age.



FIG 13.

### THE SIGNIFICANCE OF ALEXANDER'S CAREER

Alexander's career was a turning point in the history of the world. He originated many forces which have

influenced the development of civilization. The results of his conquest led to the 'marriage of the East and West'. The East before his time was almost an unknown land. In a short reign of thirteen years he brought new geographical knowledge which received additions in later ages from the Crusades and opened the eyes of men to the possibility of a great world empire. Alexander was more than a conqueror. He had a passion for Greek civilization and culture which he tried to introduce into the remote corners of the Oriental World. He did this with the zeal of a missionary untouched by fanaticism. A wise toleration marked his conquering career. After the battle of Arbela when the Persian empire lay at his feet he did not proscribe the Persian religion. On the other hand he encouraged marriages between his officers and Persian women, while he himself adopted something of the Persian habits and dress and married a Persian princess named Roxana. He trained thousands of Persian soldiers, appointed many Persian nobles to positions of trust and responsibility, and founded no less than seventy cities as meeting places for both classes of his subjects. It seems that in idea his empire was founded on the doctrine of the equality of man, a universal society designed to conform to a common standard, and subjected to a sovereign as the supreme benefactor of mankind, in fine a Holy Greek Empire foreshadowing the Holy Roman Empire of later times. Naturally, Greek culture also was modified, to some extent, by the civilization of the East. This fusion of Graeco-Oriental culture was altogether a new thing. It ultimately gave rise to a period of liberal thought in art, science, and philosophy and prepared the field for the reception of the doctrine of universal brotherhood preached by Christianity.

Alexander gave to the world the idea of a universal empire. Though his empire was broken up immediately

after his death, the idea survived—that of the municipal freedom of the Greek polis within the framework of an imperial system. When the Romans conquered Greece they not only diffused Greek influences but they also built their empire upon the foundation laid by Alexander.

### THE HELLENISTIC WORLD

After the death of Alexander the Great his vast empire was almost immediately broken up into three main divisions. In the East, his general Seleucus Nikator founded an empire comprising Persia, Mesopotamia, Syria and part of Asia Minor, that is, almost all the area from the Hellespont to the Indus. The capital of this empire was Antioch which became one of the greatest commercial centres of those times, through which merchandise from Arabia, India and China flowed to the Mediterranean. The western provinces of the Seleucid Empire were seized by the Parthians in 250 B.C.; but the Seleucid dominion continued in the Near East for about one hundred years until, sandwiched between Parthia and the aggressive Roman empire it rapidly fell to pieces.

The second division of the Alexandrian empire was the Graeco-Egyptian kingdom founded by Ptolemy I, another general of Alexander. Its chief city was Alexandria which, with its safe harbour and splendid library, became for a long time the most important centre of Greek civilization and culture in the ancient world.

The third and the smallest division was Macedon, ruled by Antigonos and his successors who had partial control over Greece till 146 B.C. In that year Greece under the name of Achaea was made a Roman province. Later, both Syria (63 B.C.) and Egypt (30 B.C.) also were conquered by the Romans.



## THE HELLENISTIC CIVILIZATION

Before the death of Alexander, Greek or Hellenic culture had only affected the races who dwelt on the borders of Hellenic lands. Alexander tried his policy of Hellenizing the world. He brought about conditions which helped his general to complete the task Alexander had begun. In all his conquered dominions now controlled by the hellenized Macedonians, political and military careers were open to the Greeks. The Greeks took the utmost advantage of this opportunity and flocked to the East in large numbers to take service in the armies and governments of the Seleucids and Ptolemies or to build fortunes through trade and farming. The ultimate result of this influx was that not only the courts of kings but the whole population of the countries of the Eastern Mediterranean began to speak the Greek language and became 'Greek' in blood and civilization. Indeed, the Greek language became so widespread in Egypt that the Jews had to translate the Old Testament into Greek so that the less educated among them might understand its teachings.

This culture which arose out of the 'marriage' of the East and the West was not exactly the earlier Greek culture which, previous to the death of Alexander was confined to the areas comprising Sicily, Southern Italy, the western coast of Asia Minor, the islands of the Aegean and Greece proper. It was a new culture, neither Greek nor Oriental, but a blend of both to which the term 'Hellenistic' has been applied, as against the earlier Hellenic culture of Greece.

The one great difference between the 'Hellenic' culture and the 'Hellenistic' culture in the political sphere was that the old Greek ideal of political separatism was replaced by the ideal of cosmopolitanism based upon citizenship of a

world society. In the small city states of Greece, every citizen was personally known to nearly all his fellow citizens participating directly in the government, and he spent his leisure with them in the market place, and partook in religious festivals and sports with them. It was impossible to live this type of life in the larger Hellenistic world. Men's ambitions took new directions. The vast treasure of gold and silver which the Persian emperor had stored up for generations was seized by Alexander the Great. These precious metals were converted into coin money which facilitated exchange of goods and developed credit and banking. In place of the old city state economy there developed a kind of capitalism throughout the Mediterranean world. Egypt under the Ptolemies and Mesopotamia and Asia Minor under the Selucids, saw much expansion of agriculture and scientific farming which were unknown to the Greeks before the death of Alexander the Great.

Compared with the earlier Hellenic age the Hellenistic period was undoubtedly inferior in literature, art, and philosophy. Yet, as new methods of living sprang up out of the mingling of the Greeks and 'barbarians', new philosophies came up to give new explanations of existence. Among them we may mention the Cynics who preached the virtues of poverty and the evils of wealth; the Stoics, who held that the true good of man lies not in outward objects but in the state of soul itself; and the Epicureans whose views were that pleasure (meaning good taste and moderation) was the true good.

The most creative phase of Hellenistic culture was, however, in the field of science. The accumulated knowledge of the Orient was searched out and improved upon. The Hellenistic period was in a sense materialistic, for free from the bonds of religion and philosophy, scientific knowledge was being applied to the solution of practical problems of

material comfort and efficiency. Progress was made in the fields of mathematics, astronomy and surgery. It was during this period that Euclid (323-285 B.C.) wrote his famous Geometry containing the fundamental geometrical principles of our time. Another scientist was Archimedes of Syracuse who may be said to be the greatest of physicists of the modern type in the ancient world. There are many stories about Archimedes. One of them is that while he was stepping into a bath he observed the water running over. From this incident he discovered the law of specific gravity, and it caused him so much joy that he came out naked into the streets crying, '*Eureka*', '*Eureka*'—'I have found it'. 'I have found it'.

In later times Roman, Arab and Jewish scholars assimilated the scientific knowledge of the Hellenistic world and transmitted it to the Renaissance humanists, who, in turn, passed it on to the Modern world.

## CHAPTER XI

### ROME COMES INTO HISTORY

The Romans were akin to the Greeks in language and religion ; and Rome, like Athens and Sparta, began as a city-state, but the destinies of the two countries present marked contrasts.

In Greece, no city was able to become permanently the mistress of the others. In Italy, Rome, from her position of a small city on the Tiber became the capital of a vast empire comprising the whole of the Mediterranean world and the territories of Europe as far north as the Clyde and the Rhine and the Danube. For five centuries or so Rome ruled over this empire, establishing peace and prosperity (*Pax Romana*) combined with trade and commerce, and following a uniform system of administration and codes of laws. As a result, the various heterogeneous peoples—Romans, Greeks, Spaniards, Gauls, Egyptians, Syrians, Jews—began to be acquainted with one another and feel that they were citizens of one state, having the same rights and owing the same duties. By this merging of local diversities in imperial unity for a duration of some centuries, the idea\* of a world-state became a popular conception—the idea that humanity was actually one and men might therefore live peacefully and unitedly under a single political system.

Closely associated with the idea of a world-state was the idea of a universal church. It was within the Roman empire and on the model of the Roman administrative system that the Christian community organized itself under a strong

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\* The idea originated in the West by the brief and splendid career of Alexander the Great.

central control, so that when the barbarian inroads shattered the outward unity of the Empire the spiritual unity of western Christianity endured for eleven centuries longer. This two-fold idea—a world-state with a universal religion was perhaps the chief contribution of Rome to the world. This idea profoundly influenced the course of European medieval history. Even the nations of today are combining in different organizations to regain and put this idea into practice for the preservation of peace and goodwill among themselves.

The Romans were unlike the Greeks in character and achievement. The whole of the Greek mind was speculative, and so it developed art, science and philosophy. The Romans, on the other hand, were a practical people. They excelled in the art of state-craft and formation of laws. The Roman governmental methods served as a model for the institutional development of later Europe. Similarly, the principles of Roman jurisprudence formed the sub-structure of the legal systems of most of the modern states of Europe. Though Roman jurisprudence was forgotten during the centuries following the break-up of the Empire, it was rediscovered and taught in the medieval universities of Europe. Even the law students of our own country have to learn Roman jurisprudence to understand the principles of legal codes. It may be observed that the Roman legal system was not the creation of single individuals like a Hammurabi or a Solon or a Lycurgus, but it was the production of the Roman race as a whole. So also the Roman empire was not a brilliant creation of individual genius but the slow and measured outcome of the labours of a people.

Rome also gave to Europe the Latin language which, for many centuries, acted as the general language of western Europe. This helped the development of a single culture over this area. The Romans were great builders. The roads

and highways which they constructed to connect Rome with the conquered regions, and the buildings in which they developed architectural forms of their own acted as a great stimulus to civilization.



FIG. 14.

Just as the Greeks tried to hellenize their conquests, the Romans wanted to romanize their empire, and the Romans had greater powers of assimilation than the self-centered

Greeks. Some of the countries which Rome conquered had already an ancient civilization superior to her own. Rome did not destroy that civilization, but allowed it to be introduced among her people. To sum up the function of Rome in history: Rome gathered up into one world-state the civilizations of the Mediterranean, which she enriched through adaptations and original contributions of her own in the field of government and law; she kept the peace for centuries; and she passed on her legacies to the younger race from the north, who, trained in the school of Rome became in the ages that followed, the civilized nations of modern Europe.

#### EARLY INHABITANTS OF ITALY

The earliest inhabitants of Italy of whom we have any definite record were certain Indo-European tribes closely related to the Greeks. They entered Italy about the same time as the Achæan Greeks entered Greece. There they came into contact with a Southern Caucasian people, the Etruscans, who had a culture similar to the Minoan culture of the Aegean. It is believed that the Etruscans were originally sea-rovers who had come from the coast of Asia Minor and established themselves in Northern Italy. Before the rise of the Romans the Etruscans were the leading race in Italy. No one has yet been able to read their language, but they are reputed to have been the early rulers of Rome to which they brought many civilizing arts from abroad.

The Etruscans settled in the Po Valley as early as 1000 B.C. and spread to the south. The region occupied by them became known as Etruria.

It is probable that the Etruscans first pursued a policy of imperialism and made a wide range of conquests. Because of their ascendancy the western sea was called *Mare*

*Etruscans* throughout the period of antiquity. But the Etruscans had no power of organization to defend their gains. By 500 B.C. the political supremacy of Italy passed out of their hands.

The Indo-Europeans who invaded Italy had two great branches—the Latin and the Umbro-Sabellian. The Latins occupied the flat country south of the river Tiber. This country was called Latinum. The Umbro-Sabellians comprising the Umbrians, Sabines and Samnites occupied East and Central Italy and even spread southwards as far as Bruttium. From the eighth century onwards the Greeks settled in Southern Italy and Eastern Sicily. On the coast of Southern Italy the Greeks settled in such large numbers that this region came to be called *Magna Grecia* or Greater Greece.

The island of Sicily also may be regarded as a continuation of Italy, separated from the mainland only by the narrow Strait of Messina. The native race of Sicily was called *Sikels*, from whom the island afterwards took its name. The Sikels were Italian in origin, but they early became Greek in speech after coming in contact with the Greek colonists who settled in that important island on the main trade-route of the ancient world.

The destinies of Sicily were united to those of Rome for nearly seven hundred years. During this long period Sicily had almost the same influence on Roman history as the islands of the Aegean had upon the history of Greece. The Greeks used the Aegean islands as stepping-stones to the shores of Asia Minor to make it a part of the Greek world. Similarly, the Romans fought with the Greeks and the Carthaginians for the possession of Sicily and then used the Island as a stepping stone which brought them to the African shore and started them on a career of conquest.



## THE ORIGIN OF ROME

The tradition as to the founding of Rome is the famous story of Romulus and Remus. When Troy was taken by the Greeks, Aeneas, the great hero, fled to Italy where he was fortunate enough to marry Lavinia, a daughter of King Latinus. Aeneas had a son named Ascanius who built a city on a high hill and called it Alba Longa—the long white city. Numitor, the last king of Alba Longa, was slain by his brother, and his daughter Rhea Silvia was compelled to take her place among the Sacred Virgins. However the god Mars loved the maiden and she gave birth to twins, Romulus and Remus. The twins were thrown into a river by their wicked uncle, but they were rescued and suckled by a she-wolf, and then brought up by a herdsman and his good wife. When the twins grew up they killed their uncle. A new city was built on the Palatine Hill on the left bank of the Tiber, and it was called Rome after the name of Romulus. The city of Rome was thrown open to all including vagabonds and criminals; and wives were obtained for them by capturing the unmarried Sabine women who were invited to partake in a festival at Rome.

Whatever the truth of the legend might be, it seems likely that Latium, the 'flat country', south of the lower course of the Tiber had many (thirty) settlements of the Latin people, each under a king ready to wage war against his neighbours. In course of time these settlements or cantons (as they were called) formed among themselves an alliance known as the Latin League under the leadership of Alba Longa, a town on the summit of the Alban Mount. It was as the military outpost of Alba Longa that Rome first gained importance. This outpost was doubtless intended to protect the northern frontier of Latium against the Etruscans, the most powerful neighbours of the

Latin tribes. It was situated about fifteen miles from the mouth of the river Tiber on the Palatine hill, one of a group of seven low hills which furnished protection and provided food for the canton-communities. One of these communities was the Sabines who settled on the Quirinal, a hill close to the Palatine. There might have been other communities also. In course of time all the communities of the seven hills united on equal terms to form a single nation and Rome was soon extended to embrace the seven hills with an enlarged ring of walls. This city of seven hills was destined to be the mistress not only of the Italian peninsula but of the whole Mediterranean world and the former Grecian empire.

#### ROME'S FAVOURABLE POSITION

The geographical and other conditions of Rome had much to do with her expansion and political supremacy. Rome was in the centre of Italy. This central position enabled her to separate her enemies of the north from those of the south and to move her own troops by the shortest possible routes. The Etruscans were powerful enemies of Rome. But the Gauls had caught them from the back and prevented them from engaging their full forces on the Romans. On the other hand the Romans, guarded by the hills, were not so much exposed to the attack of the warlike Gauls, for Etruria acted like a buffer-state between Latium and Gallia Cisalpina. The Sabines and other hill tribes also were apparently just as brave and powerful as the Romans. But as hillmen they tended to be divided among themselves, and being poorer, could not afford the necessary equipment for warfare. The next enemies of Rome were the Greek colonists in Italy and the Carthaginians. The former were too few in number and too much divided in motives to

compete with Rome for the supremacy of the Italian peninsula; and the latter were too much engaged in commerce and navigation to have eyes to see the growth of Rome until it was too late.

Rome was situated fifteen miles from the mouth of the river Tiber. This distance protected her from the sudden attack of pirates who in those days swarmed in the Mediterranean. At the same time Rome could control trade and commerce from a centre where all important highways met. As Rome lay in the centre of Italy, Italy too lay in the middle of the Mediterranean. Rome was thus naturally situated to exercise control over the Mediterranean world.

#### FAMILY AND CLAN IN ROMAN HISTORY

The unit of Roman social and political life was the family. The family was composed of father and mother, sons and daughters, slaves and clients.\* The most important element in the family group was the authority of the father or *paterfamilias*. He had absolute control or *potestas* over the life and property of his family members, and could sell them and even put them to death without appeal. At the same time it was also his duty to protect them and look after their interests.

The influence of the family upon the history and destiny of Rome was very great. The Romans learnt here some of their splendid virtues—the virtue of obedience and respect for law as well as the virtue of exercising authority with justice and moderation. By these virtues they were able to gain the dominion of a vast empire.

Larger than the family was the clan or *gens*. All the descendants in the male line of a single ancestor, whether

\* The clients were mostly emancipated slaves and dependants who placed themselves under the protection of some Roman chief.

by blood or adoption regarded themselves as members of one clan. Thus a clan often comprised several families. The next group and higher than the clan was the *curia* which may be compared to the ward of a modern city. Above the *curia* was the *tribe*, the largest subdivision of the Roman community.

For the framework of political life the population of Rome was divided into three tribes—*Ramnes*, *Tities* and *Luceres*. Each of these tribes was divided into ten *curiae*; and each of the *curiae* was, in turn, sub-divided into a number of clans. So the whole city consisted of three tribes, thirty *curiae* and about three hundred clans.

#### EARLY ROME BECOMES A REPUBLIC

It is almost certain that the city of Rome was at first ruled by kings. Of these kings history gives us the names of seven who ruled from 753 to 509 B.C. The traditions hopelessly blend the doings of these kings into facts and legends. We cannot be sure even as to their names. It seems, however, that the last three kings, called the Tarquins, were of an Etruscan dynasty and they represent a temporary Etruscan dominion over Rome. The Romans, especially the Roman nobles, at last grew tired of the foreign rule, drove them out and established a republic instead. From this period Roman history really begins and continues for many centuries without a break in its natural course.

When the monarchy was overthrown the people of Rome began to reorganize the government. In place of the king, two magistrates were appointed who jointly exercised the powers of the king. They were called *consuls* (or colleagues). In times of great public danger, one of the consuls exercised absolute power for a period of six months.

He was called a dictator. The state was then under martial law, and the life and property of the people were entirely at the dictator's disposal.

Next to the consuls stood the *Senate*, consisting of three hundred members, the 'fathers' (*paterfamilias*) or heads of the ancient clans of the community. The important functions of the Senate were to elect consuls, to examine every law and resolution passed in the popular Assembly and to ratify any treaty Rome had entered into with any other city.

Besides the Senate there were two other assemblies--the *Comitia Curiata* and the *Comitia Centuriata*. The *Comitia Curiata* or Popular Assembly comprised all the citizens of Rome. It was this body which enacted the laws of the state, determined upon offensive war, and ratified the election of the consuls. Every resolution of the *Comitia Curiata* required for its validity the confirming vote of the Senate. The *Comitia Centuriata* was the result of a reform to distribute as evenly as possible the burden of taxation and military service. But this body soon became the sovereign assembly of the nation and usurped all the powers of the earlier patrician assembly, the *Comitia Curiata*.

### ROMAN RELIGION

Religion was a part of the Roman constitution. But this part of the constitution was not worked out by any special class of persons. In other words, there were no professional priests at Rome, such as we find in some oriental countries. Almost every magistrate possessed some sort of priestly character, and his duties were in some way connected with the rites of the temple or the sacrifices at the altar.

The Roman gods were simply vague personifications of

the powers of nature, very different from the clear-cut shining human forms of the gods of Olympus. The chief of the Roman gods was *Jupiter*, somewhat like the Greek god *Zeus*. Jupiter was the special protector of the Roman people. Next to Jupiter was *Mars*, the favourite god of the Romans who were fond of calling themselves 'Children of Mars'. Vesta was a favourite household goddess whose symbol was the fire on the household hearth. Taking the whole nation as a family the Romans had a common national hearth in the Temple of Vesta where six vestal virgins kept the fire always burning from generation to generation. Among other household deities mention may be made of *Lares* and *Penates* who also watched over house and grain-store. The worship of ancestors was also a most important element in the religion of the ancient Romans.

The Romans believed that the will of the gods could be communicated to men by means of oracles; and in times of great emergency they would seek advice from the famous Oracle of Apollo at Delphi in Greece. There was a class of people known as soothsayers who professed that they could know the will of the gods by examining the entrails of victims sacrificed at the altars. The Romans had four religious colleges—the *Keepers of the Sibylline books* which were consulted in times of great danger; the *College of Augurs* which interpreted the omens particularly by the flight of birds; the *College of Herald's* which kept the treaties made with foreign nations and interpreted international law; and the *College of Pontiffs* which superintended all religious matters and the calendar. The head of the College of Pontiffs was called Pontifex Maximus, a title which was afterwards assumed by the Roman emperors, and after them, by the Christian bishops.

It has to be added that in the Roman religion there were no elements which could satisfy the higher cravings

of the human mind. It was purely of a legal character—a sort of contract in which if the worshippers performed their part, that is, if they offered sacrifices, the gods must also fulfil their part of the contract by providing good crops and granting victories. There was no element of devotion or morality in the Roman religion which, therefore, easily gave place to Christianity and its new views about God.

### THE PATRICIANS AND PLEBIANS

About the sixth century B.C. there were in Rome two classes of people—the patricians and the plebians. The patricians were the descendants of the old families who had lived from remote antiquity in Rome. All outside this privileged class were known as the *plebs* or *plebians*.

The distinction between these two orders was as old as the state itself; but the authority of the king overshadowed this distinction to some extent. With the abolition of the monarchy the inequalities between them became more marked than before. Only patricians could become consuls and hold other high offices and they alone could sit in the Council of Elders, or Senate, which decided important questions such as war and peace. Though, many plebian landholders had seats in the Comitia Centuriata, they commanded only a minority of votes in that Assembly. Naturally, the choice of magistrates, priests and other high officers of the state was limited to patrician candidates; and since the Comitia Centuriata could vote only on questions proposed by the magistrates, it was really controlled by the patricians.

Besides political disabilities there were other grievances of the plebians. They had no protection for their lives and property against the despotic authority of the patrician magistrates, because they had not the right of appeal.

Patricians and Plebians were equally citizens of Rome, sprung from the same race and speaking the same tongue. Yet there were glaring social and economic inequalities between the two orders. The marriages between patricians and plebians were not recognized as legal. The patricians owned most of the land and monopolized the common grazing ground for their cattle. The Plebians were frequently called up for military service, so their agriculture suffered, and they became burdened with debts and their property went to their creditors. Under these circumstances it was natural for the Plebians to resort to agitations, to strikes and even to threats of secession.

#### STRUGGLE BETWEEN PATRICIANS AND PLEBIANS

The history of the struggle between the Plebians and the Patricians covers a period of about two centuries. The first real concession obtained by the Plebians was the right to elect their own magistrates called *tribunes*.

The persons of the tribunes were inviolable, and any one doing them any violence was declared an outlaw whom any one might kill. The tribunes were not allowed to go out of the city more than a mile, and their houses were always to be kept open so that any oppressed Plebian might take shelter there.

Under the protection and leadership of the tribunes the Plebians carried on a struggle for other rights and privileges that they wished to share equally with the Patricians. We may note first the agrarian agitation for the fair disposal of the 'public lands'. The Romans when they conquered a territory confiscated a portion of the lands of the vanquished, and added it to the public lands of the state. The extent of these lands rapidly increased as Roman dominion extended. Now, the Patricians claimed for themselves the



exclusive right of enjoying the new lands won by the blood of the Plebians. The Plebians demanded a fair share of these lands. But the land question remained unsolved and the failure of the Romans to settle it equitably was one of the causes of the downfall of the republic and of the ruin of the empire.

The next phase of the struggle which is a landmark in the history of the Roman people, consisted in the revision and reduction to writing of the customs and unwritten laws of the state. Until the middle of the 5th century B.C. Roman law was unwritten. After years of bitter party strife a commission of three was sent to Greece to examine the laws of Athens and other Greek states. Then ten men were appointed to draw up a Code of laws equally binding on both orders. In 450 B.C. the famous *Twelve Tables* were promulgated and inscribed on twelve tablets of bronze, and they were hung up in the forum where they could be seen and read by all. Only a few fragments of these celebrated laws have been preserved. But it can be said that these laws of the *Twelve Tables* may be regarded as the foundation of Roman Law, as the laws of Solon were to the Athenian constitution.

After the passing of the *Twelve Tables* the Plebians continued to gain other concessions. The *Valerio-Horatian* laws provided that every Roman citizen should have a right of appeal, that the persons of the tribunes were sacred, that they were on a level with other magistrates of the state and that *plebiscita* (laws passed by the Plebs) should be binding on the Plebians and Patricians alike. From this time the struggle entered upon a new phase. The tribunes appeared more powerful than ever and their position became constitutionally more secure. A few years afterwards *Lex Canuleia* recognized mixed marriages. Next, we find the Licinian laws which, among other things, provided

that one of the consuls must be a Plebian. With a Plebian consul presiding at the elections other magistracies were thrown open to them. The political cause of the Plebians was further advanced by other laws which provided that the Plebians might enter the sacred colleges of the pontiffs and the augurs. Lastly with the passing of the *Lex Hortensia* (287 B.C.) measures passed by the Plebs had the full force of law without any further conditions whatever. Thus ended the long struggle between the two orders. All the Roman citizens were now equal before the eye of the law.

As a result of this long struggle the Plebians gained admission to all offices of the state, and they became equally eligible with the Patricians for seats in the Senate. In social life too the Plebians became free from all disabilities in respect of birth and marriage. Nay, on account of their superior number and wealth the Plebians became the preponderant section of the people. One result of this admission of the Plebians to full Roman citizenship was that the strength of the state increased and Rome began to advance towards the goal of its destiny—to make all the world *Roman*.

One word must be said on the nature of the struggle between the Patricians and the Plebians. It had been waged in a constitutional manner. In spite of the many grievances under which the Plebians laboured, they never lost sight of the law of the state or took recourse to violent means and bloodshed. Whenever any external danger threatened Rome they forgot their grievances and fought for the state. The Patricians too were not die-hard politicians. When they found that resistance was useless they had the political wisdom to give way in order to prevent matters getting to a climax.

This 'Constitutional struggle of early Rome, which was fought with constitutional weapons only' was unlike the

later conflict in Rome between the Optimates and the Populares. The latter was waged not for the protection of lives and property or the securing of equal political rights and social status (for which the Plebians fought) but for party supremacy and capturing the power of the government. And the means employed both by the Optimates and the Populares were, often unlike those of the Plebians, violent, leading to the wholesale murder of their opponents.

With the constitutional struggle of the Plebians we may also contrast the reign of terror of France of the eighteenth century and the horrible assassinations of Ireland and Russia of the twentieth century.

## CHAPTER XII

### EXPANSION OF ROME OVER ITALY—(509-264 B.C.)

While the Plebians were carrying on their struggle for rights, Rome was moving along the path which was to bring her step by step to the possession of a dominion comprising first the whole of Italy and then the entire Mediterranean world.

The process of this expansion went through four main phases. The first phase saw the expansion of Rome over Italy. This involved Rome in wars, first with other Latin tribes whom Rome bound to herself as *socii* or allies in the Latin League. Next, Rome conquered her northern rivals, the Etruscans, and then the Samnites of Central Italy, and lastly the Greeks of Southern Italy. The second phase of Roman expansion involved Rome in wars, known as Punic Wars, with Carthage. In this period Rome also subdued the Gauls who had occupied Lombardy. The third phase opened in the closing years of the Punic Wars and ended with the conquest of Greece, Asia Minor, Syria and Egypt. In the fourth phase Roman expansion comprises the wars of the great Consul Julius Caesar against the transalpine Gauls, and his two invasions of Britain which led to the final conquest of the country by Claudius and Hadrian within a century of Caesar's death. After Caesar's conquest of Gaul, the Rhine was marked as the north-eastern boundary of the Roman Empire in Europe. The 'forward policy' of the Emperor Trajan for a further extension of the Empire proved a mistake, and the frontiers remained roughly what they were during the time of Julius Caesar.

At each stage of expansion, Rome consolidated her

conquests with military roads and colonies, as well as by devising a new machinery of administration for her provinces and adjusting the central government at home. The Romans seldom abandoned a territory into which they had once penetrated.

In this chapter we shall speak of the expansion of Rome in Italy.

For more than a hundred years after the fall of the Tarquins Rome was pressed by enemies on all sides. To this period belongs the struggle with the Volscians, Aequians and Sabines, as well as with the powerful Etruscans. The Roman armies often had to fight hard in defence of their homes almost within sight of the city. Fortunately Rome at this time made an alliance with the Latins and became the head of the Latin League (493 B.C.). This position was the key to the foreign policy of Rome and by this position she ultimately succeeded in beating back all invasions. The famous Cincinnatus who was appointed dictator while working on his farm, conquered the Aequians. The warfare with the Volscians was mainly conducted for the possession of Antium, an important Volscian town on the coast. One incident in this warfare is the story of Coriolanus (see Sec. 23 (ii)). The wars against the Sabines were mostly in the nature of border raids. Soon the Sabines, Aequians and the Volscians faded into insignificance, and with the capture of the important Etruscan city of Veii in 396 B.C., Rome became supreme over her neighbours.

#### THE GAULS SACK ROME—THE BATTLE OF THE ALLIA

In 390 B.C., only six years after the victory over Veii, Rome was faced with a nearly fatal disaster—a sack of the city by the Gauls. A wandering tribe of Gauls poured through the Alpine passes, and advancing into Southern Italy,

marched upon Rome. At the river *Allia*, only a few miles from Rome, they completely defeated the Roman army and then sacked and burned the city itself. But the invaders were not in a hurry to press home their advantage and the Capitol had time to be well fortified. Many legends gathered round this invasion. One of them is the attempt of the Gauls to surprise the Capitol by night and the heroism of Manlius who was awakened by the cries of the sacred geese and repulsed the enemy inflicting confusion and loss on them. Whatever may be the value of such legends, the fact remains that the Gauls who had no fixed plan of campaign, soon marched north again in as sudden a fashion as they had come, after fruitlessly besieging the Capitol for seven months.

In spite of the defeat on the *Allia* and the sack of the city, Rome was hastily rebuilt after the disappearance of the Gauls. Taking advantage of her temporary misfortune her old enemies, the Etruscans, Volscians and Aequians, and her old allies the Latins rose against her. But all these rebellions were suppressed, the whole of Southern Etruria was annexed, and all Latinum from the hills to the Mediterranean was brought under subjugation to Rome. The Latin League was recognized by the absorption of the important city Tusculum, and it was made more dependent upon Rome than before. This closes the first stage of her expansion in Italy.

### THE SAMNITE WARS

The second stage of the Roman expansion in Italy begins when Rome tried to reckon with her opponents of the outer ring of Italian tribes. The most powerful of these tribes were the Samnites. The campaigns against them is known as the first, second and third Samnite Wars (343-290

B.C.). Between the first two of these wars Rome had to quell a serious insurrection among her own allies. This was the Latin War. The details of all these wars are intricate and can be traced here in outline only.

(i) *First Samnite War*.—While the Romans were engaged in clearing Latium of Aequians and Volscians, the Samnites were also entering upon a career of conquest. They coveted the fertile Campanian plain and captured the rich cities of Cumae and Neapolis, which the Greeks had founded. The Romans had also fixed their eyes on the same region. So a contest between the two peoples became inevitable. Rome could not prosecute this war for long on account of the mutiny among her armies who were joined by the Plebeians oppressed by debt; and because of the fear of a serious insurrection among her allies—the Latins. The Samnites also were anxious for peace because they had to turn their attention to Greek enemies in their rear. Thus the first Samnite war was ended in 341 B.C. by a treaty, and in the great Latin war which broke out in the following year, the Samnites fought on the side of the Romans.

(ii) *The Latin War*.—The Latins had formed an alliance with the Romans (The Latin League) on terms of equality, but they were now growing very much dissatisfied with their position. The Aequians and the Volscians were conquered at their expense but they received no share of the conquests. Yet they had to follow the commands of Rome and her lead in war, just as the allies of the Confederacy of Delos had to follow the leadership of Athens. The Latins, therefore, sent an embassy to Rome, demanding that the two nations (Latins and Romans) should henceforth form one state, that half of the Senate should be chosen from the Latin nation, and that one of the two consuls should be a Latin. These demands were indignantly refused. So the Latin War began, which was to decide whether Rome was

simply to become a member of the Latin League or the Latins were to be the subjects of Rome.

The Latin War continued for about three years (340-338 B.C.). The Latins were defeated by the Romans at the Battle of Veseris or Vesuvius and at the Battle of Trifanum, and they were forced to lay down their arms. The Latin League as a political body was abolished, and the Romans became the absolute masters of Latinum. To keep the cities completely isolated inter-marriage and trade among them were forbidden. Separate treaties were made with separate cities. Some of them were allowed full citizenship while others had only the duties of Roman citizens without the right of voting and of office. But Rome did not proceed as far as Athens did, so as to embitter the feelings of the conquered Latinum by a demand for tribute.

(iii) *Second Samnite War.*—A few years after the close of the Latin war, the Romans were again at war with the Samnites. The cause of this war arose out of disputes with a Greek town Palaeopohs, standing near modern Naples. The inhabitants of Palaeopolis injured the lands of the Roman settlers in Campania and were helped by the Samnites. The Romans protested against the interference of the Samnites. But the latter were firmly convinced of the justice of their action and the strength of their armies. So the second Samnite war broke out.

It was a long and dreary struggle which lasted for twenty-two years. Palaeopolis soon surrendered, but the Samnites held out and inflicted several disasters on the Romans. Their most memorable achievement was the capture and humiliation of the Roman army at the *Caudine Forks*. When the Roman troops were on the march for the town of Lueria which was under their protection and was now besieged by the Samnites, they were carelessly led into a narrow pass called the Caudine Forks. There they found



themselves blocked at both ends. The Samnites forced the commanding consuls to agree to a treaty of peace. The terms of the treaty were that the Romans should give up all the places which they had conquered during the war. Then the whole Roman army was sent back to Rome 'under the yoke'\* in token of surrender.

The Roman Senate, however, rejected the humiliating terms of the treaty, and sent the defeated consuls back to the Samnites. So the war went on.

For some years more the war went in favour of the Samnites who were now helped by many of the one-time allies of Rome. But from 314 B.C. the tide turned when the Roman consuls gained some decisive victories. Ultimately Bovianum, the chief stronghold of the Samnites was captured and the Etruscans who had joined the Samnites were defeated by the Romans at the Battle of Lake Vadimo. Peace was therefore made by which the Samnites gave up all the conquests they had made, and the ancient alliance on equal terms between the two nations was restored.

(iv) *Third Samnite War*.—Six years after the treaty which ended the Second Samnite war, the Samnites again took up arms. This time they succeeded in forming a powerful league comprising the Etruscans, the Umbrians, the Gauls and other nations to make a last desperate effort to break the power of Rome. But the coalition was broken up by a decisive victory of the Romans at the *Battle of Sentinum*. Then the Romans carried on a desperate struggle against the Samnites and other enemies who were gradually left to themselves and were ultimately forced to yield one after another. The brave Samnite general, Gaius Pontius, who disgraced the Roman army at the Caudine

\* Two spears were struck in the ground and a third was laid across. The whole army had to pass without arms under the third spear. This implied great insult.

Forks was taken as a war prisoner and was ungenerously beheaded. Finally the Samnites were compelled to sue for peace.

The Samnites were the hardest enemies of Rome in Italy. With the surrender of the Samnites (281 B.C.) Rome was in control of the whole peninsula of Italy except the Valley of the Po in the north and the territory of the Greek cities in the south.

#### CONQUEST OF THE ITALIAN GREEKS—KING PYRRHUS OF EPIRUS

The last stage in the conquest of Italy began when Rome came into contact with the Greek cities of Southern Italy. Within a period of eight to ten years after the close of the Samnite wars almost all these cities fell under Rome except Tarentum, a noted sea-port in Magna Graecia. By the terms of a treaty between Rome and Tarentum, Rome was bound not to approach the harbour of Tarentum. But Rome violated this treaty. The Tarentines straightway attacked the Roman fleet in their harbour, killed the admiral and destroyed most of the ships. The Romans demanded amends, but the Tarentines who expected help from the Greek adventurer, King Pyrrhus, declared war.

King Pyrrhus of Epirus was a cousin of Alexander the Great. As Alexander had established an empire in the East, so Pyrrhus had an ambition of building up a similar empire by subduing the whole of the Western Mediterranean. At the invitation of the Tarentines, Pyrrhus came over to Italy. With the aid of his elephants which the Romans had never seen before, Pyrrhus gained two victories (at *Heraclea* and *Asculum*), but he had to lose thousands of his bravest troops. After the second victory he crossed over to Sicily to put down the tyrants and to help the Greeks against the Carthaginians. Pyrrhus was successful in Sicily for a time. Returning to Italy, however, he suffered a disastrous defeat at *Beneventum*. Unable to face the

Romans any longer he gave up the campaign and crossed to Greece where he died, three years after. A few years after the departure of Pyrrhus, Tarentum surrendered to Rome; its walls were razed to the ground and its fleet was handed over to Rome.

By 264 B.C. Roman supremacy was recognized in every part of the peninsula of Italy. The victory over Pyrrhus opened Roman diplomatic relations with Egypt and implied that Rome might ere long play a leading part in Mediterranean politics.

#### ROMAN ORGANIZATION OF CONQUERED ITALY

With the fall of Tarentum, the city of the Seven Hills became the mistress of all Italy south of the Po Valley. (The region north of the Po river was conquered during the Punic Wars). There had been, of course, greater conquests made before this, for instance, the conquests of Alexander the Great. But while the empire of Alexander began to break up soon after it had been won, Rome's conquests were of a permanent nature and formed the beginning of the public order of Europe. It may be useful to consider the causes of their long duration.

*Statesmanship which bound Rome's allies to herself.*—Rome did not mean to rule absolutely over her Italian subjects. Indeed, of all the nations of the ancient western world the Romans trusted least to the mere fighting of battles. They did not, at least in name, annex the districts which they conquered in Italy. By their marvellous organization they formed a sort of confederacy among the various states. The members of this confederacy did not feel themselves as the subjects but as the 'friends and allies' of the Romans. Though these allies possessed varying rights there was one feature in common among them—they all

possessed a large power of self-government which on the whole induced them to remain faithful to Rome. Everywhere the Romans conciliated the governing classes by grants of special privileges. Thus, while the Athenians had deadly enemies among their upper classes throughout their empire the Romans found their strongest supporters in that class. At the same time the Romans adopted a policy of 'Divide and Rule' (*Divide et Impera*) by which the different states were clearly separated from each other, and the right of making war and peace was taken away from these states. In times of war each of the allied states was called upon to supply a number of soldiers under its own officer. The number was fixed by Rome. In return for their services the states got what came to be called 'the Roman Peace' (*Pax Romana*).

*Roman colonies.*—The Roman colonies played an important part in the development of Roman power. They acted as garrisons in the conquered territories and at the same time effected a social and racial unification also, that is, the romanization of the conquered peoples in language, religion and culture.

The colonies of Rome fall under two classes—*the Roman colonies* and *the Latin colonies*. The Roman colonies were those which were settled in conquered territories and were governed from Rome. They retained all the rights and privileges, private and public, of Roman citizens. They served in effect as permanent military camps to hold in subjection the subject peoples whose position was like that of the Plebians in Rome before 494 B.C. (first secession—appointment of tribunes). The colonies of this kind were usually on the sea-coasts of Latium and Campania.

The Latin colonies were so called, not because they were founded by Latin settlers, but because their inhabitants possessed substantially the same rights as the old Latin

towns enjoyed at the end of the great Latin war. They possessed some of the most valuable of the private rights of Roman citizens (*commercium* and probably *connubium*), and could acquire the right of voting by migrating to the capital and taking up permanent residence there, provided they left behind in the colony town their sons to take their place. These colonies were settled throughout Italy and they formed in the words of the great Roman historian Mommsen 'the real buttresses of the Roman Rule'.

*Roman Militarism.*—All the Roman colonies were kept in close touch with the capital by means of splendid military roads of which the Romans were the inventors. These roads were of great importance for swift carrying of Roman armies into the heart of the enemy's country and for suppressing a rising before it had time to organize itself.

Another feature of Roman militarism was the appointment of a dictator to meet the stress of war—as was often done during the period of the Samnite wars. The Romans realized that there were times when greater rapidity of action and more secrecy of debates was required than would be possible in the Comitia or the Senate. So forgetting their party struggles and their liberty for the sake of efficiency and being inspired by a common devotion to the state they would trust even one of their men for their political salvation. Taking all these facts into consideration it may be said that 'Rome was greater than her greatest men'.

We may sum up the principles of Roman government in Italy thus: 'Graduated privileges, local independence, close relation with herself, and mutual isolation, these were the main features of the system of government which bound Rome's allies to her . . . .'

## CHAPTER XIII

### ROMAN DOMINATION OF THE MEDITERRANEAN WORLD

When the unification of Italy under Roman domination was completed, Rome turned her eyes to the peoples beyond the seas, first to the Carthaginians, and then to the peoples of the Eastern Mediterranean.

The city of Carthage was founded by a band of Phoenician colonists. By her favourable position and the vigour of her inhabitants the city soon became the mistress of an empire comprising some 300 cities in Africa, the whole of Corsica and Sardinia, two-thirds of Sicily and the greater part of Southern Spain. The Romans for a time maintained peaceful relations with this North African power and even made an alliance with her against Pyrrhus. But it was inevitable that the rising power of Rome should come into conflict with Carthage which had the command of one half of the Mediterranean and began to cast greedy eyes over the other half.

The two rival cities were well matched as antagonists in respect of power and material resources. The Romans, however, had certain elements of strength in their polity, which the Carthaginians did not possess. The Romans succeeded by liberal principles of government in romanizing the peoples of Italy and attaching them to her. They made constitutional progress which removed the mischievous privileges of an oligarchy of birth and raised the common people to a complete social and political equality with their former lords. On the contrary, the Carthaginians had no union at home. The chief power of their government

was in the hands of a few great families which formed a sort of oligarchy. The Carthaginians cared for commercial advantages only, without making any effort to connect their widely scattered territories by any bond of union. They looked down with contempt upon the conquered peoples, the Greeks in Sicily and the Numedians in Africa. These peoples remained alien to their conquerors in race, language and religion, and ready to rebel at any opportunity.

Another contrast between Rome and Carthage can be found in the character of their respective armies. The Roman armies were in the main composed of *citizens*, like those of Athens who fought against the Persians at Marathon and Salamis. In place of the citizen-soldiers of Rome the troops of the Carthaginians were mostly, like those of Xerxes, *mercenaries* whose principal interest was their pay. The mercenaries were good troops in themselves but they could not be relied upon in adverse circumstances in the same way as the Roman soldiers.

### THE PUNIC WARS

The contests between Rome and Carthage continued for more than a century (264 B.C. to 146 B.C.). These are known to history as the Punic Wars, for the Romans called the Carthaginians 'Phoenicians' or '*foeni*'. There were three Punic Wars with occasional intervals between them.

The immediate cause of the first Punic War arose over Sicily. The western part of that island had long been under the possession of the Carthaginians, and the Greeks ruled in the eastern part with Syracuse as their capital. The Romans feared that the Carthaginian influence in Sicily would be harmful to Roman interests. They therefore wanted to drive the Carthaginians out of Sicily, and in this task the Romans were helped by the Greek Sicilian cities.

Within the first three years of the War the Roman legions won several victories over the Punic mercenary armies. Then, as the Romans felt the necessity for a strong navy, they built a fleet of one hundred and twenty vessels, and defeated the enemy off the promontory of Mylae on the northern coast of Sicily. During the last period of the war Hamilcar Barca, a great Carthaginian leader, raided and plundered the Italian coast line, but he was also finally defeated. A peace treaty was made, by which a portion of the eastern side of Sicily still remained in the hands of Syracuse; but the rest came under Rome and became her first province beyond the seas.

There was peace between Rome and Carthage for about twenty years, but the feeling between them was embittered by an act of bad faith on the part of Rome. While Carthage was occupied at home in a terrible war against her mercenaries who rose in mutiny, the Romans took the opportunity to seize Sardinia and Corsica which were Carthaginian possessions. As compensation for this loss of territory the Carthaginian leader Hamilcar Barca wanted to acquire Spain which would add to the wealth of Carthage and supply troops to carry on a war of revenge against Rome. Taking his young son Hannibal with him, Hamilcar Barca crossed to Spain. It is said that when starting for Spain young Hannibal was made to swear by his father solemnly that he would never be friends with the Romans who had so ungenerously wrested Sardinia from Carthage. The conquest of southern and eastern Spain was begun by Hamilcar, carried on by his son-in-law Hasdrubal, and completed by his son Hannibal.

The cause of the Second Punic War was the rapid progress of the Carthaginians in Spain. Rome feared that her commercial interests in the north-east of Spain would be endangered by her encroaching rival. The war broke out



when Hannibal disregarding Roman protests gained possession of Saguntum an ally of Rome.

The events of the Second Punic War can only be given here in bare outline. With astonishing speed Hannibal advanced from Spain, crossed the Pyrenees and marched through southern Gaul. Then he had a stupendous task—the crossing of the Alps. The season was already far advanced. It was October and snow was falling. The mountain passes were narrow and dangerous, and in places they had to be cut wider for the passage of the monstrous bodies of the elephants. Often heavy stones were hurled upon the trains by the hostile bands that held possession of the heights. But yet day after day the army toiled up until the summit was gained. Then the descent began and was successfully accomplished though not without severe toil and loss. Of the fifty thousand men and more with whom Hannibal had set out only twenty thousand had survived and these 'looked more like phantoms than men'.

After giving his army a short rest Hannibal advanced into northern Italy. The Romans had not the remotest idea about the plans of the great Carthaginian general. They expected that the War would be waged at a distance from Italy—in Africa and Spain. So they were startled by the news that Hannibal had already crossed the Pyrenees and was among the Gauls on the Rhone. Two consuls were hastily sent to defend Italy. But in the battle of the Trebia the united armies of the two consuls were defeated by the Carthaginian forces. In the following spring Hannibal practically destroyed a great Roman army at the battle of Lake Trasimene (217 B.C.). Then he inflicted a still more crushing defeat upon the Romans at Cannae.

About this time Philip of Macedon concluded an alliance with Hannibal and threatened an invasion of Italy. In the next year (215 B.C.) Syracuse revolted against Rome

and the Greeks of south Italy declared for Hannibal. The outlook for Rome seemed as black as it could be.

However the truth of the remark that 'the Romans are most to be feared when their danger is the greatest' was never better illustrated than by their conduct in the face of these accumulated dangers. Every attempt was made to raise and equip a new army to take the place of the legions lost at Cannae, and they were successful in regaining some of their losses. Philip of Macedon was the first to retire from the contest and to give up all thoughts of invading Italy on account of the formation of a league against him in Greece itself. The Romans had also kept up a struggle in Spain, which now became a great theatre for their successful action against the Carthaginians. Meantime Hannibal's brother, Hasdrubal, somehow evaded the Roman army in Spain and moved towards Italy for the relief of his brother who was sadly in need of aid. His army was completely destroyed on the river Metaurus and he himself was slain.

The defeat and death of Hasdrubal turned the tide of war in favour of the Romans. The Romans, without making any attempt to fight Hannibal down in Italy, resolved to carry the war into Africa, hoping that the Carthaginians would be forced to recall Hannibal for the defence of Carthage. The Carthaginians in their great alarm had already sent for Hannibal to defend Carthage itself. In 202 B.C. a great battle was fought at Zama between Scipio and Hannibal in which the latter met a crushing defeat. After this battle Carthage was forced to sue for peace.

By the terms of the treaty Carthage was required to give up all claims to Spain and the islands of the Mediterranean, to surrender all her ships of war and all her elephants, and to pay a huge indemnity. She was also to wage no war without the permission of the Romans. Rome

was now not only supreme in Italy but she became the undisputed mistress of the western Mediterranean and a strong military power. She acquired new provinces, and exercised a protectorate over Africa.

### THE THIRD PUNIC WAR

There was however a third Punic War which completed the final destruction of Carthage. In the interval between the Second and the Third Punic War, Rome was deeply involved in the affairs of the East and Carthage took this opportunity for reviving her trade and increasing her wealth. The prosperity of Carthage stuck like a bone in the throat of the Romans, and particularly of one Roman senator named Cato. Cato believed that if Rome was to prosper Carthage must disappear, and whenever he made a speech he would conclude it with the motion '*Carthago delenda est*'—Carthage must be destroyed.

The Romans at last manufactured an excuse for war against Carthage saying that Carthage had broken her treaty with Rome by attacking an ally of Rome. The Carthaginians knew that war with Rome was their death sentence and so they yielded to every barbarous demand of Rome, including the sending of three hundred of their children as hostages. But nothing availed. The Roman troops appeared before the gates of Carthage, and the siege began in 149 B.C. For about four years the city held out against the Roman army. During this period the Carthaginians freed all their slaves, and put every man, woman and child to prepare weapons for the defence of the city. Day and night the work continued, and it is said that the women cut off their hair to be twisted into cords for the engines of defence. But at last the city was taken by storm and razed to the ground. The Carthaginian territory in

Africa was made into a Roman province with Utica as the leading city.

### SOME COMMENTS ON THE PUNIC WARS

The blunders and defects of the Romans brought them some disasters in the beginning of the First and Second Punic Wars. One of these blunders was their failure to march at once on Carthage when they landed in Africa after their naval victory at Ecnomus. Another blunder was the system of recalling the consuls with their armies after a year, as the term of appointment of consuls was for one year only. The terms of the peace which concluded the First Punic War were also defective and foolish in the sense that they were exorbitant and insolent but they left the enemy only irritated and not destroyed and gave them twenty years to recuperate their strength. When the Second Punic War broke out Rome repeated blunders similar to those which she committed in the First. The Romans wanted to bring the contest to a conclusion in Spain without making any preparation for the defence of the northern frontier. To their surprise they found Hannibal on Italian soil ready to march his troops to the gates of Rome. Then, again, the Romans did not always follow the Fabian tactics of wearing out the enemy by avoiding pitched battles. The result was the disaster of Cannae.

Yet, in spite of these blunders the Romans could ultimately become victorious on account of certain fundamental traits in their character. The Romans had that doggedness and that readiness for personal sacrifice which defeated all the calculations of Hannibal. Every disaster which the Romans had met, made them more determined than before. The Roman Senate did not lose its head even amidst the

greatest dangers and disappointments; and it calmly proceeded to mend matters to the best of its capacity.

Again, the success of Rome was largely due to the organization and firmness of her government. The unity of the Roman state though not very great at that time, was much greater than elsewhere in the ancient world, and it was a government of the people who trusted each other and could act together. They had also a high ideal of national honour which they were determined to preserve at all costs. A sense of justice and law, in spite of repeated breaches of faith, regulated the relations of the Romans to each other, to the state and even to their enemies. Rome progressed as long as she kept this ideal. She began to decline with the decay of her morality and sense of justice and law.

The difference in the nature and constitution of Rome and Carthage can be proved by the results of the two great battles—the battle of Cannae and the battle of Zama. Both were equally serious defeats, the first, of Rome and the second, of Carthage. But Rome continued her struggle with renewed vigour after Cannae. Carthage could not long survive the defeat of Zama. Rome who fought for hearth and home in Italy and glory and revenge in Africa could fight to her last man. Carthage, a city of merchants hateful to her subjects, could fight only to her last dollar.

There is no doubt that Hannibal was a great general. He showed wonderful skill and military tactics particularly in the great battle of Cannae. His capacity for leadership is proved by the fact that he led a mercenary army of different races through all manner of danger and privations without provoking a single mutiny. His only defect was that he had no war machine for taking a city by storm. The mistakes added to the strength of the Romans. He had taken it for granted that if he could gain some initial success he would be joined by all the Italian allies of Rome

on Italian soil. But he was disappointed in his expectations. Only a few joined Hannibal, and they were more of a burden to him than a help for they constantly needed his protection against the Romans. So his presence was needed in several quarters at the same time.

No doubt Hannibal's cavalry and light-armed troops at first gained some great victories, but most of these troops were mercenary. Africa, Spain and Gaul were their recruiting grounds. The various regiments of the Carthaginian army had nothing in common except the interest of plunder. In the end they could not prove equal to the citizen-soldiers of Rome all of whom were inspired by one ideal. On the other hand the mercenaries by their too long a stay in Italy became demoralized. This was particularly so after their victory at Capua.

Another cause of Hannibal's failure was that there was no large naval operation during the whole course of the war. The Carthaginians strangely neglected their navy and they showed poor judgment by sending too late reinforcements, which if sent to Hannibal in time might have decided the issue of the war in their favour. On the other hand the Romans could easily transport their soldiers to Africa, and meet their enemies in a decisive battle.

Lastly, Hannibal did not get adequate support from the Carthaginian government which viewed with jealousy and distrust his too successful career in Italy. It was eventually a contest of a man of military genius against a nation, and the nation conquered the man.

### ROMAN CONQUESTS IN THE EAST

The Punic Wars gave Rome further naval and military supremacy in the western Mediterranean. Within seventy years of the battle of Zama, Rome extended her empire in

what is now called the Balkan peninsula and got a footing in Asia Minor. This was the result of a series of Wars, first with Macedon and then with Antiochus of Syria. During this period she also consolidated her power in Northern Italy and in Spain.

We have already said that Philip of Macedon formed an alliance with Hannibal after the battle of Cannae. Philip's object was to exclude the Romans from the Adriatic ports. He also made an alliance with Antiochus of Syria to divide between them the territories of the king of Egypt and occupy certain Egyptian possessions in the Aegean. So Rome could not remain idle while the Macedonian king was prosecuting his plans against her as a large part of the grain supply of Italy came from Egypt.

In the wars that followed the Romans gained splendid success in the battle of *Cynoscephalae* and of *Pydna*. As a result Macedon was brought to the same dependant condition to which the battle of Zama had brought Carthage. The Kingdom of Macedon was not destroyed, but was kept as a buffer state as a protection of the northern frontiers against the barbarians of the Danube Valley. About the same time Corinth the chief commercial rival of Rome in the east was destroyed and Greece under the name of Achaëa became a Roman province joined to Macedonia. The Romans as usual adopted the policy of 'divide and rule' (*divide et impera*).

Meanwhile a new war broke out with Antiochus the Great, king of Syria. He had started hostilities with Roman allies at Pergamum and Rhodes, seized the Egyptian possessions on the north of the Aegean, and was, at one time, in Greece itself. The object of his presence, he declared, was to give liberty to the Greek cities. But the Greeks were in no need of a liberator as they had just been declared free from the Macedonian yoke by the Romans.

As soon as the Romans heard the news that Antiochus was in Greece, they sent an army against him. The Syrian king was completely defeated at the battle of Magnesia (190 B.C.). He lost all his territories in Europe and in Asia Minor west of the Taurus range. He had also to pay a large war indemnity and to reduce his fleet to 10 ships.

Romans who went to Spain as deliverers from Carthage, established themselves as rulers of the country. Towards the end of the second century B.C. Spain was organized as two provinces 'Hither' and 'Further'. For a long time Spain continued to be a restless and troublesome country requiring the vigour and decision of Roman generals such as Cato and Titus Gracchus to bring things into order. Gradually, Roman traders and merchants and the Roman arts of peace thoroughly romanized the country.



## CHAPTER XIV

### REVOLUTIONS AND THE FALL OF THE ROMAN REPUBLIC

In the last two chapters we have briefly told the story of the wonderful career of conquest of republican Rome first as the mistress of Italy, and then of the greater part of the Mediterranean world. But the strain of continuous warfare for more than a century and the effect of the sudden rise to greatness gave rise to many problems in the state.

#### PROBLEMS OF ROME AFTER THE GREAT WARS

In the first place, the simplicity of Roman life with its rigid ideas of duty and morality was no more to be found. There was a time when a Roman was frequently summoned from the handles of the plough to lead forces to battle, and after finishing his task he returned to the field. But now the Romans by coming into contact with Greek culture acquired a love of pleasure which, to them, meant dissipation and of liberty which frequently lapsed into license. The influence of the provinces was almost equally dangerous. The wealth of those territories flowed into the Roman treasury and enriched the politicians, traders and money-lenders. In place of the citizen-soldiers, the professional soldiers, always a disturbing influence, appeared in the state. The Roman officials could not, on their return to Rome from the provinces, adapt themselves to the restrictions of the republic. A love of power and, with it, the spirit of individualism grew up. That is, the Romans passed from

the stage when the community stood first in the attention of all to one in which individual aims and personal ambition took first place. Another great change which followed warfare and conquests was the fall of agriculture. The peasant farmers who formed the background of the Roman army remained engaged for years in Spain, Africa, and Macedonia. There had been no one to till their lands in their absence. When they returned they found that all their lands had been bought by the capitalists of Rome who engaged thousands of slaves (i.e., captives of war) in their fields. Moreover cheap corn now poured into Italy from the rich fields of Sicily, Corsica, Africa and Egypt with which the Romans were now in easy communication. The peasant farmers were unable to compete against slave labour and imported corn, and they flocked to Rome, there to live on the verge of starvation. The situation became even more serious by the fact that the Roman Public lands were largely in the hands of the wealthy land-owners. The poor people began to cry for the re-distribution of those lands.

Lastly, by the end of the wars of conquests a great change came upon the constitution of Rome. The Comitia, once the real assembly of the citizens of Rome, became now, when the Romans were scattered all over Italy and the provinces, an assembly of the unemployed residents of the city and could not rightly speak for the whole Roman population of the Empire. The consuls also often remained absent from the city to do military service in distant lands. In consequence the Senate now became all powerful. But the Senate was composed mostly of landed aristocrats full of the corruption which wealth and power generally bring with them. They had neither the inclination or the ability to carry through the reforms which became so necessary in the middle of the second century B.C. As a result there followed violent struggles between the Senate and the

popular party, in the course of which the powers of both were swept aside by military dictatorship.

### THE GRACCHI

The struggle began when the people elected Tiberius Gracchus to the tribuneship in 133 B.C. Tiberius Gracchus and his brother Caius Gracchus were connected with the noblest families of Rome. But they, like Pericles and Alcibiades of Greece, took up the cause of the populace. Though Tiberius was an idealist he was no revolutionary, but a moderate social reformer. His principal measure was an agrarian law. As the barbarian slaves had dispossessed the free cultivators, Tiberius aimed to put these cultivators into possession of their own lands. This measure roused a storm of opposition among the wealthy landowners of the Senate. Rioting began in which Tiberius was killed with three hundred of his followers.

The efforts of Tiberius Gracchus were resumed by his younger brother Caius Gracchus. Caius was a man of greater insight and ability than his brother, and his programme was more far-reaching. Tiberius wanted certain economic reforms only, but Caius wanted to destroy the Government of the Senate and to set up in its place the influence of the rich merchants and other moneyed classes: the equestrian order, as it was called. He also brought measures providing that corn was to be sold at less than half-price to citizens in Rome and proposing that all the Latins should be made full Roman citizens, and all the Italian allies should be given the rights and privileges then enjoyed by the Latins. The last measure made Caius unpopular and paved the way for his downfall, as Roman citizens were not yet prepared to share their privileges with others.

When Caius stood for the third time (121 B.C.) for re-election as tribune he was defeated. Finding his life in danger he had to flee from Rome. Shortly afterwards he was slain by a faithful slave in a sacred grove near the banks of the Tiber.

The Gracchi were murdered in their attempts to bring about reforms. But the murder of the two brothers and many of their followers set an example of violence and bloody contest which had a disastrous effect on the Roman government. Two distinct political parties arose. One was the supporter of the cause of Gracchi. They were called the Popularies. The other was the party of the nobles or Optimates who supported the Senate. These two parties began a revolution which deluged Rome with blood in the disastrous civil wars of Marius and Sulla, of Caesar and Pompey, and of Antony and Octavian.

#### MARIUS AND SULLA

For many years after the death of Gracchi there was disorder and trouble within the Roman dominions. The nobles set themselves to undo all that the Gracchi had done and to rule as they had ruled before. But the poor of Rome had now leaders among them and they knew their own powers. One such was Caius Marius. Marius distinguished himself by defeating Jugurtha, a rebellious Numedian (Algerian) prince, and organizing the defence of Italy against some northern barbarians called Cimbri and Teutons. These two tribes had destroyed the Roman army in Gaul and were about to attack Rome. Rome was in as great danger as she had faced a hundred years before when Hannibal threatened her from the same direction. At this crisis people looked upon Marius, the conqueror of Jugurtha as the only man who could save the Roman state. After two

years of suspense Marius was able to defeat and beat back the invaders with enormous loss. Rome breathed again and remained free from danger of Germanic invasions for the next four hundred years.

After the defeat of the barbarians Marius became a great personality in Rome. The actions and events of his career were already having important results on Roman politics and military organization. In the first place, he was elected consul for six years in succession. This was a new and unconstitutional feature in Roman history. Secondly, Marius made drastic changes in the Roman army, and made it an effective weapon against the republic. Up to this period a property qualification had been required for enlistment in the Roman legion. Marius did away with this restriction and called for volunteers from amongst the landless citizens. These soldiers who owed their employment and their pay to their General naturally became attached to him rather than to the State. This made it easy for a powerful general to use his army for military dictatorship and the overthrow of the Republic.

But in spite of his military genius Marius was not fit for popular politics. He ultimately betrayed the popular party, fled to Asia where he stayed till another turn of fortune brought him to Rome as the head of another faction.

In opposition to Marius, the leader of the Popular party, was Sulla who represented the Optimates. Sulla distinguished himself in the social war, a struggle for the settlement of some pressing domestic politics. At this time the inhabitants of Italy were divided into three classes—*Roman citizens*, *Latins*, and *Italian allies* or the *Socii*. The *Socii* were without the rights of citizenship. They became conscious of their great services during the Punic Wars, and demanded equal rights and privileges as the Roman citizens. Caius Gracchus tried to partially satisfy these

demands by an extension of the franchise. It was perhaps the most statesmanlike of all his proposals, and would have saved much of the trouble to come. But the fickle Roman mob violently opposed it. The discontent of the *Socii* finally led to open war. Even at the end of the first year's fighting, however, Rome was compelled to give way. Roman citizenship was given to all who would lay down their arms within two months and send in their names. This concession virtually ended the Social War.

Hardly was the Social War over when Rome had to face a formidable enemy in the East. Taking advantage of the internal troubles of Italy, Mithridates, King of Pontus (in the north-east of Asia Minor), made himself master of Asia Minor, Macedonia and Greece. The Roman power in the East seemed shaken to its foundation, and a war became imminent. Now, the question arose as to whether the command should be given to Marius or to Sulla. Marius, an old man of seventy, could not endure being pushed aside by Sulla, who had once been his lieutenant. Both sides were ready for violent measures. Sulla was at this time outside Rome. He now marched upon Rome and took it. It was the first time that a Roman consul entered the city at the head of the legions of the republic. Finding resistance hopeless Marius fled for his life. Sulla now became the master of Rome and, indeed of the Roman world. After having arranged things for the government, he left Rome to take up the command against Mithridates.

For the five years when Sulla was engaged in the East, the Marian or democratic party in Rome enjoyed their day. But they were entirely powerless to resist Sulla when he returned to Italy. Sulla won easy victories against the Marians. He treated his enemies with a ferocity much greater than that shown by Marius. He was the originator of a deadly weapon from which Rome was to suffer too

often,—the proscription. A list was published, comprising the news of those whom he designed to put to death, and a large reward was offered to any one who killed those persons. Thousands of the enemies of Sulla were thus hunted down and slaughtered in Italy, Sicily, Spain and Africa.

The Senate confirmed all that Sulla had done and made him a dictator. In return Sulla made a series of laws which put a stop to democratic advance and sent Rome back to a form of government in which the Senate was all-powerful. Sulla's constitution however was only a party triumph. It broke down within ten years after his death. The senators had not the character or the ability to work out a constitution and it was no longer possible 'by a stroke of the dictator's pen to restore to the Senate its old dignity and honesty'. Besides, the danger of a professional army under the lead of a single man remained as great a menace as before. On the other hand Sulla's example, the desire to play the Sulla, roused the personal ambition of great military men and brought the idea of the rule of one man within the range of practical politics. In fact, it was one of Sulla's own followers, Pompey, who overturned the constitution established by him and launched Rome in civil war for the next forty years.

### POMPEY AND CAESAR

After Sulla's death his friend, Pompey became the leading figure in Roman politics. He agreed to repeal the hatred laws of Sulla. But he found the Roman world far from peace and order. Pompey's service was first called for in Spain where he spent several years in settling the affairs of that country. Then, his brilliant success against the pirates in the Mediterranean gained him great honour.

Next, he was given the planning of the war against Mithridates and the control of the entire Roman policy in the East. In a short time Pompey crushed the army of Mithridates who fled to the Crimea and died there. Then Pompey marched out of Asia Minor, conquered Syria and brought the boundaries of the Roman Empire up to the kingdom of Parthia and the river Euphrates. Thus the name of Pompey is associated with the expansion of the Roman Empire in the East, while, as we shall see, one of his rivals Julius Caesar made similar expansion in the West.

The period (from 67 to 62 B.C.) while Pompey was in the East was marked in Rome by the Catiline conspiracy as well as by the rise of Caesar to political importance.

Catiline was an aristocrat who tried three times for the consulship, and was rejected three times. He, therefore, organized a revolution to overthrow a system of government and society from which he had suffered, by murdering the magistrates and plundering the rich. Fortunately, the plans of the Catiline conspiracy were frustrated by the consul Cicero, the greatest of the Roman orators. When Cicero obtained information of the evil activities of Catiline he exposed the plot in the Senate chamber where Catiline himself was present. Then Catiline was slain with many of his followers, and Cicero was hailed as the 'Saviour of the nation'.

The Catilinian outbreak increased the honour of Cicero but for the time being it lessened the popularity of another prominent man of Rome, namely, Gaius Julius Caesar. Caesar belonged to a noble family. He was the nephew of Marius. This relationship entitled Caesar to claim the leadership of the Popular and Marian party. He had already taken an active part in the agitation for punishing the ring-leaders responsible for Sulla's bloody work of proscription. Caesar had, however, ambitions of his own, i.e.,



to secure his position in Roman politics before Pompey's return from the east. For this purpose he spent enormous sums of money upon public games and dinners. His popularity increased and he was about to obtain from the people an extraordinary command abroad, which would raise him to the level of Pompey. It was at this time that the Catiline conspiracy was discovered. Many suspected, perhaps unjustly, that Caesar was implicated in the affair. For a time it discredited him, as it discredited every one connected with the popular party. But Caesar managed to maintain his position in Roman politics by making friends with Crassus, the richest man of Rome, and utilizing his money so necessary for the successful career of a politician.

When Pompey returned from the east (61 B.C.) he was joined by Crassus and Caesar. This all-powerful 'Three'—Pompey, Crassus and Caesar—now formed a coalition which is known in history as the 'First Triumvirate'. It was a secret arrangement to cut the Roman world like a tempting cake into three parts and divide it among themselves. Pompey was to remain in Rome and keep the Senate in order, Caesar was to have command in Spain and Gaul, and Crassus was to be given control over Asia. The two ablest senatorial leaders and possible rivals of the Triumvirate, Cato and Cicero, were banished, the first out of Italy and the second from Rome.

About three years after the formation of the First Triumvirate Caesar marched north with a large army and went to Gaul. His governorship was to last for five years (afterwards prolonged to ten). He spent this time in subduing the whole of Gaul as far as the river Rhine. The story of his campaigns has been admirably related by Caesar himself in his famous book, *Commentaries*. Like Alexander the Great, Caesar wanted to see how vast a country it was possible for a single human being to conquer

in a life-time. His rapid movement upset all the plans of his enemies, and tribe after tribe submitted on the mere appearance of his troops in their territory. Thus the suzerainty of Rome was established, in name at least, over

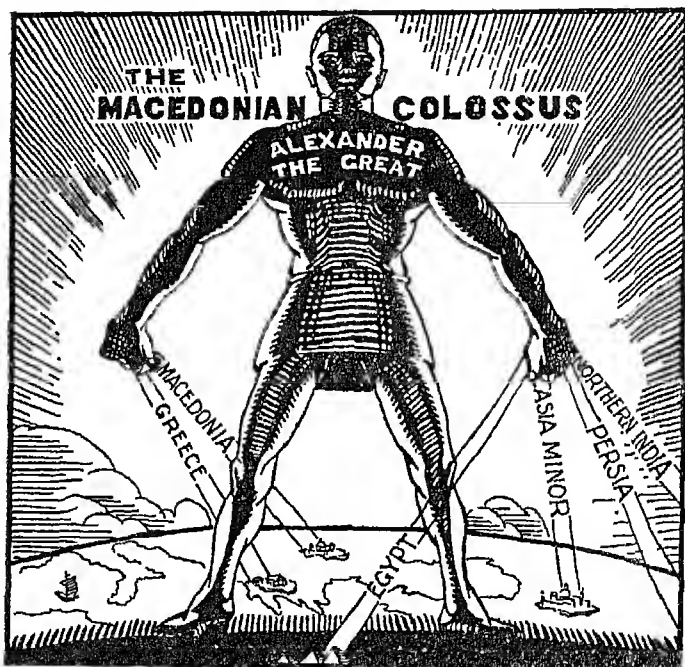


FIG. 15.

the whole of Gaul. While Caesar was fighting the Celtic tribes in Brittany, he found out that they were getting help from the neighbouring island of Britain. So he invaded Britain twice (55 and 54 B.C.) and forced certain tribes to submit. This was not a conquest.

Caesar's success, largely due to his own genius, raised him in the estimation of the Roman people, and his army, rich with spoils became ardently devoted to him personally, and not to the Republic. With the help of this army Caesar now aspired after the Imperial crown.

While Caesar was fighting in Gaul Crassus was killed in the East in fighting against the Parthians. The death of Crassus ended the First Triumvirate. It also led to rivalry between Pompey and Caesar, for rivalry (as well as company) is easier with two than with three. Pompey became jealous of Caesar's reputation and became afraid of losing his position. He, therefore, did not want Caesar to come back to Rome from Gaul unless he came as a private citizen. The last link in the chain of friendship between the two leaders was also broken at this time, for Julia, wife of Pompey and the daughter of Caesar, had died at childbirth. When Caesar heard of Pompey's activities against him he hastened out of Gaul and in spite of the protests of the Senate crossed the Rubicon which separated his province from Italy. This amounted to a declaration of war.

Caesar advanced rapidly and gave his enemy no time for adequate preparation. When he approached Rome, Pompey with a large number of senators fled first to Brundisi, and thence into Greece hoping to find support near to the scenes of his former triumphs. Caesar at first did not follow Pompey. His first care was to secure his position in Italy. A civil war broke out and people became afraid that the terrible scenes of the days of Marius and Sulla would be re-called. But Caesar pardoned his enemies and gave assurance that life and property should be held sacred. His clemency and moderation won all classes to his side.

Having settled affairs at Rome, Caesar first dealt with Spain which still sided with Pompey. Then with marvellous

rapidity he returned to Italy and crossed the Adriatic in pursuit of Pompey in the East. There he met Pompey in the battle of Pharsalus. Pompey was defeated, and he sailed for Egypt where he hoped to get help, but he was murdered by an assassin on the sea-shore of Egypt.

Pompey was dead, yet there was much fighting to be done before Caesar could become undisputed master of the Roman world. Caesar stayed for sometime in the East meeting Cleopatra, the queen of Egypt, in a contest at the royal house of Ptolemy, and subduing a rising in Syria in the battle of Zela. It was in connection with this battle that Caesar sent his famous despatch to Rome '*Veni, Vidi, Vici*' (I came, I saw, I conquered). He had also to pursue the war in Africa which was in the hands of the Pompeians. The last battle of Caesar was fought and won at Munda in Spain when the Pompeians made their final stand.

### THE DICTATORSHIP OF JULIUS CAESAR

Caesar now returned to Rome. He had already been created dictator for ten years; and now he was made dictator for life. Though Caesar could not hold dictatorial power for more than four years, during this short period he did enough to show that he was a most capable statesman and the real founder of the Roman Empire. It was Julius Caesar who first definitely concentrated the government of the Roman dominions in the hands of a single ruler. At the same time he originated a stable system of government which aimed at avoiding the horrors and confusion of the last fifty years and established an empire on equality of rights, that is, he placed Italy and the provinces on the same footing. In fact, Caesar's system was the basis on which the Roman Imperial constitution was modelled by his successor Augustus. The Senate became a mere advisory

council. The machinery of the government and the appointment of magistrates was in the hands of Caesar himself.

Caesar introduced important reforms in the municipal towns of Italy, by defining what matters should be left in the hands of the local authorities and what should be retained by the central government. In Gaul and Sicily the rights of Roman citizenship were granted to the people, taxes were reduced and the oppression of the governors was done away with. Thus the distinction between the conquerors and the conquered were gradually being wiped away. Among other important works of Julius Caesar may be mentioned, the improvement of agriculture in Italy, and the revision of the Calendar which became known as the Julian Calendar. The Julian Calendar corrected slightly by Pope Gregory XIII in 1582 is still used by most of the civilized world. Caesar also planned a code or digest of the Roman laws (which work was left to be completed by the Emperor Justinian six centuries later) and many public works. As a man of letters Caesar ranks high among the great writers of Rome; and he proposed to form a library at Rome to take the place of the great Alexandrian library which had been partly destroyed during his campaign in Egypt. He did not, however, live to complete all this work.

Caesar had bitter personal enemies who were jealous of his position. Besides, the changes which he introduced in the state were regarded with great suspicion by a large number of people who believed that Caesar was aiming to make himself a king. This belief led to a conspiracy against him. And in 44 B.C. he was murdered at a meeting of the Senate on the Ides (15th) of March.

#### ANTONY AND OCTAVIAN

The murder of Caesar again plunged Italy and the Empire into another civil war. Brutus and Cassius, two

of the ring-leaders of Caesar's assassins, tried to seize all power. But the people, instead of flocking to their support, mourned the loss of Caesar as their friend and benefactor, and they sided with Caesar's friend, Antony, who soon made himself master of the situation. Brutus and Cassius were forced to leave Rome for the East.

Antony now gained possession of Caesar's papers, and soon obtained wide popular support. He could not long enjoy his unique position. A new rival appeared in the person of Octavian, grand-nephew of Caesar and a boy of eighteen whom Caesar had named in his will as his son and heir. But Octavian carried an 'old head on young shoulders'. He did not, for the present, pursue a quarrel with Antony who was a highly popular figure in Rome. He proposed a league with Antony and Lepidus who was another leading man of Rome at that time. This league is known as the second Triumvirate (43 B.C.). The three now divided the Roman world among themselves just as Caesar, Pompey and Crassus had done once before. Octavian was to take the west, Antony was to govern the east, and to Lepidus fell the control of Africa.

The first action of the Triumvirate was to renew the dreadful proscriptions of Sulla's time and Cicero who had incurred the hatred of Antony was an early victim. After this, Brutus and Cassius who were in the East demanded attention. Both Octavian and Antony crossed the Adriatic, followed their enemies into Thrace and completely defeated them in the battle of Philippi. Both Brutus and Cassius, believing the cause of the republic lost forever, committed suicide.

After the battle of Philippi Octavian returned to Italy, while Antony proceeded through Greece and Asia Minor for the purpose of settling the affairs of the provinces. In the East he met Cleopatra, queen of Egypt. From that time

he became enslaved by the beauty of the 'Serpent of the Nile'. Days and nights were spent in enjoyment and feasting. News came to Rome that Alexandria would be the capital of the Roman empire.

Octavian now felt that the time was ripe to strike against Antony. He induced the Senate to depose Antony from the command of the East, and proceeded to attack him. Both parties made preparations for the conflict. On the west coast of Greece, a great sea-fight took place just off the promontory of Actium. While the issue of the battle was as yet undecided Cleopatra, who was present, ordered her ship to be rowed away. Seeing this, Antony also deserted the battle and followed her. The rest of the fleet surrendered to Octavian. Soon after both desperate, Antony and Cleopatra, committed suicide. With the death of Cleopatra the dynasties of the Ptolemies came to an end, and Egypt became a part of the Roman empire.

## CHAPTER XV

### THE ROMAN EMPIRE (27 B.C.—476 B.C.)

The political history of the Roman Empire may be divided into two periods. The first period saw the stability and prosperity of the Empire under the Julio-Claudian and Flavian emperors, and the zenith of its majesty and grandeur under the Antonines. The Age of the Antonines has been rightly called the Golden Age of the Roman Empire. The *Pax Romana* or Roman Peace reigned everywhere in the vast dominion and helped the development of agriculture, industry and commerce. But the last three hundred years of the Empire after the death of the last Antonine, Marcus Aurelius (180 A.D.) is mostly a history of its decline with only a temporary revival of its prosperity under Diocletian and Constantine. The Empire contained within itself the seeds of its own destruction, inasmuch as it failed to solve its socio-economic and political problems. The infiltration of the barbarians into the Empire and the expansion of Christianity with its ideal of the unity of religious belief which indirectly supplanted the unity of political allegiance, weakened the Empire still more. A cause of further weakness was the division of the Empire into two parts—the Western Roman Empire and the Eastern Roman Empire. When Odoacer the barbarian deposed the helpless puppet, Romulus Augustulus, the Western Roman Empire collapsed without any hope of revival.

#### REIGN OF AUGUSTUS

After the victory at Actium the people of Rome, worried by wars and anarchy, called upon Octavian to



establish a government that would guarantee peace and prosperity. From the events of the last few years they perceived that Rome urgently needed a stronger and more permanent control than could be afforded by the powerless machinery of the Senate and magistrates. A big man as the leader of the army must rule. Yet the people who prided themselves on their freedom could not yet tolerate a 'monarchy'.

In this situation Augustus did not like to follow in the steps of Julius Caesar. Caesar had been a daring innovator who ruthlessly did away with the traditions of Rome and the power of the Senate by siding with the popular party. But Augustus was, above all things, a conservative who did not like to suffer the fate of Julius Caesar by introducing abrupt reforms. With astonishing tact he linked the new government to the old Republican traditions of Rome. No change was proclaimed. The Senate and the people gave him the honorary title of '*Augustus*'—the name taken by all subsequent Roman rulers, but he called himself neither king, nor dictator, nor emperor. He chose a popular and unofficial title, *Princeps*, which really means 'the chief man' of the state. The Senate was also made to confer upon Augustus the *proconsulare imperium*. In practice it meant that he was allowed to retain full command over the army not only within the city walls but also throughout Italy and the provinces. By further legislation Augustus became the *tribunicia potestas*, by virtue of which he controlled the magistrates and the Senate, and exercised an unlimited power of veto. With the combination of the *imperium* (military power) and the *tribunicia potestas* (civil power) Augustus had now a strong hold on the entire machinery of the State. Thus, he secured a sound constitutional position—something like an absolute monarchy disguised by the form of a commonwealth, yet with his position legally

recognized. Augustus always claimed that universal power came to him by the freewill of the senate and the people of Rome and that he 'restored the republic'. As regards religious position, Augustus was not only the *pontifex maximus*, that is, the head of the Roman state religion, but he was also, like Julius Caesar, regarded as a kind of god. From the time of Augustus, appeared a cult of emperor-worship.

Augustus was an efficient organizer and he did something to check the abuses of government in the provinces. The provinces had suffered much in the past on account of the misgovernment and extortion of the governors and the weakness of the central government in Rome. But the *Princeps* was strong enough to make his influence felt everywhere, and it was in his interests to see that the abuses in the provinces should be checked. Under the republican system the provincial governors had not received any salary. So they tried to pay themselves by extortion. During the time of Augustus a salary was paid to the provincial governors and they were forbidden to add to it. The provinces bordering the frontiers were called imperial provinces, while the interior and more peaceful provinces left under the Senate's care were known as senatorial provinces. In short, there was no department of the Roman system which was more efficiently reorganized than the provinces.

The whole system of taxation was revised, a census was taken throughout the whole Empire to ensure a fair distribution of taxation.

Augustus was a great builder. It was his boast that he had found Rome a city of bricks and he left it a city of marble. The Augustine age of Latin literature is also called its golden age. The historian Livy and the poets Virgil and Ovid lived during this time and wrote their best works. Another event of worldwide importance occurred in

the reign of Augustus. This was the birth of Jesus Christ, the founder of Christianity, at Bethlehem in Palestine.

The one thing which Augustus left unsettled was the problem of imperial succession. This problem remained as a disturbing factor for many years to come. Sometimes the Roman usage of adoption was called into play. Another method of appointing an emperor was by proclamation by the armies. The result was that as the Roman state was officially known as the 'republic' till the close of the third century A.D., it was therefore possible for any prominent Roman citizen to claim the vacant throne. This explains why even in the ninth century A.D. Charlemagne, the Frankish chief, could claim himself as the legitimate successor of Augustus.

#### CLAUDIAN EMPERORS

Augustus could not actually nominate a successor. After his death his step-son Tiberius Claudius became emperor. The next three reigns after Tiberius were also kept in the hands of the Claudii family. Hence the four successors of Augustus are known as the Claudian emperors.

The last of the Claudian emperors was Nero (54 to 68 A.D.). The name of Nero has become a sort or synonym for monstrous vices and cruelties. During the first five years of his reign he was to some extent controlled by his philosopher tutor, Seneca. But when he attained maturity he gave signs of his true nature. He murdered his devoted but troublesome mother and wife, the latter as a mark of devotion to a lady, Poppaea, whom he afterwards married. We may also refer to the well-known story of Nero, how he 'fiddled while Rome was burning'. A fire broke out in Rome—some say that Nero instigated the fire—and it lasted for six days and seven nights. It destroyed half of Rome.

Nero did nothing to stop the fire. On the other hand he enjoyed the spectacle and amused himself by singing the tragic poem of Homer on the Burning of Troy. Next, he accused the Christians of having started the fire, and punished them in a horrible way. All the Christian populace was summoned to a torchlight parade. The torches were Christian men and women with coats of pitch and wax. At a given signal the torches were lighted up and they were burnt to death.

For his monstrous amusements, Nero was always in need of money which he secured by murdering those whose property he coveted. At last his oppression became too much for the army even. While he was in Greece there he wanted to amuse the people by his cruelties which he regarded as his artistic genius, a revolt against him broke out in Gaul and then spread to Spain. Nero hurried back to Rome, but he had already been declared a public enemy by the Senate. Finally, when he had to face a serious revolt he fled from the palace, and then committed suicide by plunging a sword into his breast helped by a servant.

Before we leave the Claudian emperors it is necessary to speak a word about the organization of what is known as the Praetorian Guard. Under the Republic there were no soldiers maintained in or near to Rome. But from the time of Augustus a Roman military body was stationed at the gates of Rome to guard the capital and the person of the Emperor. This military body became known as the Praetorian Guard. The troops of this body were recruited from Italy alone and were given higher pay than the ordinary soldier. On many occasions the Praetorian Guard played an important part in determining the Imperial succession. Caligula was murdered and Claudius was dragged to the palace as the next Emperor by the Praetorians. In

a later period, the Praetorians dominated Roman politics to a greater degree.

### THE FLAVIAN EMPERORS

A period of confusion followed the death of Nero. Then Vespasian succeeded in occupying the throne. He and his sons Titus and Domitian constitute, as it were, a new dynasty known as the Flavian.

Vespasian ruled the empire very successfully for nine years (70-79 A.D.). He was a practical man free from the vices and extravagances of the Romans. In his own household he set an example of simplicity and economy which reacted on the whole society. Vespasian turned the tide of corruption and made moderation more fashionable than extravagance. He did not like proscription and violence, and he restored law and order which had been so rudely shaken by the clash of civil strife.

Vespasian died in 79 A.D., the first emperor after Augustus who had not met a violent death. He was succeeded by his son Titus whose reign lasted for only two years (78-80 A.D.). Titus made himself beloved by his kindness and generosity. But a great disaster happened during his time. It was the eruption of the volcano Vesuvius due to which two cities, Herculaneum and Pompeii, were buried in mud and ashes.

Titus had no son. So his brother Domitian (81-96 A.D.) became emperor after him. Domitian took Nero as his model. The palace was again full of vice and conspiracy and the Emperor at last met his death from the dagger of an assassin.

The Flavian period saw considerable extension of the Roman dominions, notably in Britain where Agricola, during

Domitian's reign, advanced as far as the Forth-Clyde estuary.

### THE FIVE GOOD EMPERORS (96-180 A.D.)

After the assassination of Domitian, no ambitious general was available whom the soldiers could elect as emperor. So the Senate appointed a civilian member, an aged senator named Nerva, who was a man of lofty character. Nerva removed the popular grievances that had been growing under Domitian. He reduced the taxes, recalled the exiles of Domitian's persecutions and advanced the general welfare of the people. He reigned for two years and left the throne to his adopted son Trajan.

Trajan, a Spaniard by birth, was a man of character and ability who commanded the confidence and obedience of the army as well as the respect of the Senate. He had the spirit of Julius Caesar and wanted to earn glory by new conquests. So he pursued a 'forward policy'. And in pursuance of this he carried Roman arms across the Danube and over the Euphrates. Dacia (corresponding roughly to modern Hungary and Rumania) came under Roman conquest. In the East three new provinces were added—Armenia, Arabia and Mesopotamia. Under Trajan the Roman empire reached its maximum extent.

The successors of Trajan were all 'good'. The last of them was Marcus Aurelius, a student and philosopher of the Stoic School. The Stoics were ascetics, free from passions and most happy when they suffered most. Being brought up in such a school the Emperor wanted to remain all his life an obscure philosopher. But fate decreed otherwise. The reign of Marcus Aurelius was filled with a long series of campaigns against the Parthians on the Euphrates and the Germanic tribes on the Danube and the Rhine. While

he was in camp Marcus Aurelius wrote a small book in bits and pieces. It is a book of thoughts—*Meditations*, as it is called, about how men can be good and pure. He writes 'My city and country, so far as I am Marcus Aurelius, is Rome; but so far I am a man it is the world'. Marcus Aurelius sincerely believed that it was his duty to punish the Christians because they talked against the Roman gods and spoke of a new kingdom. In other respects his reign was as peaceful as that of his predecessor, in spite of the fact that there were a series of natural calamities during this period—great floods, failing harvests and barbaric raids and revolts.

#### 'BARRACK EMPERORS'—A CENTURY OF DECLINE (180 to 284 A.D.)

The death of Marcus Aurelius in 180 A.D. was followed by a period of internal disorder. The armies on the frontiers often became unruly and sold the imperial crown to the highest bidder. Thus, in less than a century Rome had about eighty emperors. Many of these 'barrack emperors' (as they were called) did not even come to Rome. Many more met their death from the daggers of assassins. Often the legions in different parts of the empire chose different imperators, and then followed the horrors of civil war. Trade and industry disappeared in the turmoil. Taking advantage of this unsettled condition the Persians began to make constant attacks in the East, while the Germanic barbarians began to raid the northern frontiers. It seemed that all the forces, internal and external, political, economic, social and religious, were at work for the dissolution of the Empire. At length in 284 A.D. a capable general, Diocletian, came to the throne and restored order which lasted for some years.

## DIOCLETIAN

Diocletian has sometimes been called the second founder of the Roman Empire. He realized that the vast Roman Empire was unwieldy for the management of a single ruler however able and energetic he might be. So he made up his mind that the East and the West must be under separate military commands, though the dominion was to remain one. Accordingly he appointed an assistant emperor, Maximian, in the West, while he himself maintained his court in the East. The scheme worked very well for some time, and the principle was further extended. Each of the two emperors took a subordinate colleague. The emperor became known as 'Augustus' while the subordinate was called his 'Caesar'. It was also arranged that the Augustus would in each case be succeeded by his Caesar.

Diocletian resolutely set himself to the task of introducing the reforms considered necessary. The system of imperial finances had always been oppressive and had fostered corruption. No doubt the reforms from the First Augustus to Claudius had improved matters to some extent, but it was always possible for the tax collectors and other financial officers to oppress the people. Diocletian reconstructed the imperial system to such an extent that it enabled the Roman Empire in the East (Byzantine Empire) to survive his death for more than eleven hundred years.

Diocletian ruled like an autocrat. It was the aim of the First Augustus to conceal the unbounded power of a Roman emperor under outward forms of republicanism. But Diocletian wanted to display his power by abandoning even the forms of republican institutions. At Nicomedia in Asia Minor he established a court where he observed stately and impressive ceremonies. He bore the proud title of *Dominus* ('Lord') and dropped that of *Princeps*. Everything



that touched his person was considered sacred. The function of the Senate even as a deliberative body disappeared.

A blot in the reign of Diocletian was his persecution of the Christians. But it must be said in justice to him that he sincerely believed that the Christian Church was an organization hostile to the State, because it demanded from its members an obedience which was inconsistent with obedience to the State.

### CONSTANTINE

After the death of Diocletian disputes arose about the succession, till at last Constantine came to the throne (313 A.D.) by the then Roman method of killing all his rivals.

Constantine was by nature ambitious, and in order to carry out his ambition he adopted Christianity, which was the religion of his mother Helena, the daughter of an inn-keeper. It is said that before the decisive battle of the *Mulvian Bridge* in which Constantine defeated and killed his rival Maximinus, he had seen a vision of the cross displayed in the sky. The cross had an inscription. 'By this standard thou shalt conquer'. Perhaps the Emperor thought that Christ was more powerful than the Pagan gods.

By a decree issued at Milan in A.D. 313, the year after the battle at the *Mulvian Bridge*, Constantine placed Christianity on an equal footing with the other religions of the empire. By subsequent edicts he made Christianity in effect the State religion and he himself enriched the Church with donations of money and grants of land, thus affecting its primitive simplicity, and leading to a decline from its early high moral standard. He also called the Church Council of Nicaea (A.D. 325) for harmonizing the different sects that had sprung up among the Christians and for settling their controversies.

Next to the official recognition of Christianity, the most important act of Constantine was the selection of Byzantium as the new capital of the empire because of the strategical value of its situation on the Straits of Bosphorus separating Asia from Europe. In the first place, the most dangerous enemies of the empire now were the barbarians behind the Danube and the kings of the recently restored Persian monarchy. So the establishment of a permanent basis for military operations was necessary in the East. Secondly, there were commercial reasons for the transfer of the capital. With the Roman conquest of Greece and Asia, the centre of the population, wealth, and commerce of the empire had shifted eastward, and Rome had long ceased to be the commercial centre of the State. Thirdly, there were also religious motives. The pagan priests of Rome resented the action of Constantine in espousing the new and hated religion, and regarded him as an apostate. Constantine wanted his court and government to remain away from such an atmosphere. The last and perhaps the most important reason for the removal of the capital was the political motives of the Emperor. Constantine, like Diocletian, wished to establish the structure of an absolute monarchy. For this purpose Byzantium was certainly a more favourable situation than Rome where the people had once thought themselves to be the masters and rulers of the world.

For five years Constantine planned and built his new city. He then gave it his own name, Constantinople, the city of Constantine which in recent years has been changed to *Istanbul* by the Turks. Constantine embellished his new capital with the art treasures of the cities of Greece and Asia. Henceforth Rome on the Tiber, emptied of its leading inhabitants, was no longer the supreme city in matters political as she had once been. But in later ages under the Bishop of

Rome she once more gained a supremacy in the sphere of religion which she had lost in secular matters.

After the death of Constantine the Roman world fell again into disorder and confusion. In the next hundred and forty years there were more than forty Roman emperors. It is impossible in the space at our disposal to mention even the names of all of them. But before we take leave of the Romans it will be useful for us to indicate briefly some of the causes which led to the final collapse of the Western Empire.

#### CAUSES OF THE DOWNFALL OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE

The 'fall' of Rome was not due to any sudden occurrence. The forces of decay were at work within the Empire itself during the last two hundred years of its existence. From the beginning of the third century A.D. there were symptoms of economic ruin, caused chiefly by the institution of slavery and the decrease of population. It was true that Roman slavery, in the peaceful days of the Empire, was not entirely brutal. It was also true that no civilization was possible at that time without slavery, because the machines which could replace slaves had not yet been invented. But although slavery could thus be justified in ancient times, Roman society could not get rid of its defects. With the extension of the empire the number of slaves increased and they ultimately composed three-quarters of the subjects of Rome. The slaves had no hopes of life and hence no initiative or constructive energy, and no interest in the preservation of the Empire. On the other hand slavery produced more lax moral conventions leading to a singular aversion to marriage; undermined healthy family-life and destroyed the manhood of the nation. As a result suicide and divorce increased and the population continued to

decline at an alarming rate. The decline in population was also due in part to the waste of life caused by constant wars and by plagues as terrible as the Black Death of the thirteenth century. The historian Seely says that the empire perished for want of men. Agriculture declined. Vast territories formerly astir with life and carefully tilled turned into a wilderness. The land was monopolized by a comparatively few wealthy persons, and all the efforts for the creation of a free peasant proprietorship ended in failure. This condition of things contained the germs of destruction of the State. 'Any society in which the soil, nature's free and equal gift to all, is allowed to become the possession of a few and thereby the means of enslaving the many, must inevitably decay and perish.'

In the second place, economic ruin was caused by heavy taxation of the State to provide for the extravagant luxury of the court and the lavish expenditure for the army and the host of government officials. The tax ultimately became so burdensome that the middle class in the core of every society was practically taxed out of existence. Yet only one-third of the provincial revenue found its way to the imperial treasury. The remaining two-thirds went into the pockets of the provincial officers. There was a wide gulf between the rich and the poor. The former lived in luxury and selfish indolence and the latter in poverty. There was no provision for popular schools and education which was confined to the upper classes who blindly imitated the culture of the Greeks. Nobody took any interest in the affairs of the State.

Military vigour and manly virtues which distinguished the early Romans were no longer to be found among them. So the later Emperors were compelled again and again to recruit soldiers from the Barbarians from the outskirts of the empire. This was a dangerous policy. The armies had already

become conscious of their strength and they frequently refused to obey the orders of their superiors. Some of the soldiers sold the empire according to their choice and will to the highest bidder. Robbers oppressed travellers on the roads and pirates made the seas unsafe. A state of anarchy prevailed everywhere.

While the Roman Empire was thus declining, its fall was hastened by two other external forces: the spread of Christianity and the invasion of the barbarians from over the Danube and the Rhine. We shall speak of Christianity in the next section, and of the Barbarians in the next chapter.

### TRIUMPH OF CHRISTIANITY

We have already said that when Augustus Caesar was reigning in Rome, Jesus Christ, the founder of Christianity, was born in Bethlehem in Judea. From his early life he got into arguments with the *rabbis* or Jewish priests and showed a tendency to disregard their authority. He was therefore despised and oppressed by his own people. Many of them, however, looked upon Jesus as a Messiah or Saviour whose coming was foretold by the Jewish prophets. But the Jewish priests plotted against him.

In the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Jesus appeared publicly in Judea where he first preached his new religion based on love, charity, brotherhood, equality of all men, and belief in the infinite power and goodness of God. These doctrines appealed to slaves, workers and soldiers as it held forth to them the promise of a brighter future life and happiness in the kingdom of Heaven.

Ultimately Jesus was accused of attempting to set up a kingdom rival to the Roman State and, was therefore, crucified in Golgotha near Jerusalem by Pontius Pilate, the

Roman governor of Judea. The story of the life and teachings of Jesus Christ is recorded in the New Testament of the Bible.

Gradually the situation changed. The new religion challenged the divinity of the Emperors, condemned the worship of the old gods and opposed many existing customs and also amusements such as gladiatorial combats. Naturally it had to face the persecution of the Roman emperors and the prejudices of the pagan population. Whenever there were pestilences, earthquakes and other disasters the Christians were held responsible. The position of the Christians was rendered worse after the revolt of the Jews (70 A.D.) which ended with the destruction of Jerusalem. Even before the Jewish rebellion the Christians became victims of persecution under Nero, Domitian and Marcus Aurelius. These persecutions were the result of the attitude of individual emperors. For a very long time the Christians were generally overlooked by the State, and during this period Christianity had spread widely throughout the empire. The last serious persecution was organized by the Emperor Decius, and it reached the climax under the Emperor Diocletian. Diocletian did away with all republican institutions and he wanted to rule absolutely. Naturally he was forced by the nature of his ideals to completely blot out a system which denied him total supremacy. But the new religion was not to be suppressed. The example of those who suffered horrible tortures and even death attracted thousands of converts to the New Faith.

The tide turned in favour of Christianity in 317 A.D. when Galerius, Emperor in the East, ordered that the persecution of Christians should cease. Two years later, Constantine, ruler in the West, issued a more sweeping decree, the Edict of Milan (313), which granted religious toleration throughout the Empire. At the Council of Nicæa

Constantine settled the religious controversies of Christianity. The later emperors increased the official support of the Christian Church. In 395 A.D. Theodosius abolished the public practice of Paganism and made Christianity the State religion. From the beginning of the fifth century onward all the priests of the Roman empire were Christians,

### RISE OF THE PAPACY

With the spread of Christianity the worship and doctrine of the Christian Church was taking form. In early meetings of the Christian communities the presiding officer was called the *overseer* and he soon developed into a bishop. The bishop was assisted by *presbyters* or priests who had under them other assistants also for the management of the finances and charities and the conduct of the service. The bishop wielded almost unlimited power in his district or *diocese*. In course of time and following Roman models the civil provinces of the Empire also became ecclesiastical provinces ruled by a Bishop Superior or Metropolitan having jurisdiction over other bishops. Thus there were Metropolitans at Rome, Constantinople, Antioch and Alexandria. As the expansion of the Church continued a further necessity arose for some controlling authority similar to the Emperor in civil government, who could watch over the discipline of the whole of Christendom and establish a uniformity of belief. This necessity culminated in the fifth century in the rise of the Bishop of Rome as the supreme leader of the Church of the Christian world.

There were many factors which contributed to the growth of the power and prestige of the Bishop of Rome.

Rome had so long been the political centre of the West. So it was natural for the Christians to think that the city should be the centre of the spiritual empire also, which in

time should embrace the whole world. The prestige of Rome was further increased by the belief that St. Peter, the apostle entrusted with the keys of heaven, had been the first bishop of Rome, so the bishop of Rome alone could maintain that he was the direct successor of St. Peter, and he could refuse anybody admission when he reached the gate of heaven after death. It was not however until the time of Leo the Great that the supremacy of the bishop of Rome over all other bishops was definitely established. In 445 A.D. Leo persuaded the Emperor Valentinian III to make a declaration that all bishops throughout the West should accept as law what the bishop of Rome decreed.

There were other events which increased the prestige of Leo. When the Huns under their leader Attila invaded Italy, Leo persuaded Attila to retire. This gave the succeeding popes a position of political and spiritual leadership in Western Christendom. In the turmoil following the invasions and settlement of the barbarians the people looked to the popes as their only protectors. Moreover, a new prestige was given to the papal office when Pope Gregory the Great resisted the invasions of the Lombards and sent out missionaries for converting the Teutonic peoples to Christianity. It was during Gregory's time that St. Augustine landed in Britain to spread Christianity among the Anglo-Saxons. In short, it may be said that when the Western Roman Empire was no more there arose in Rome an emperor of the Church who gradually came to wield the lost power of the Western Roman Emperor.

#### BEGINNING OF MONASTICISM

Closely associated with the organization of the Christian church is the growth of Christian monasteries. Those who lived in monasteries were monks, and the form of their life characterized by asceticism was known as Monasticism.



The Monastic system existed in the world even before Christianity. There were Jewish sects who withdrew from society and passed their days in prayer and self-denial. Among the Hindus and Buddhists also there were communities of men who lived in solitude and contemplation. During the early period of Christianity many men and women abstained from marriage and devoted themselves to prayer and works of charity. In the third century A.D., in Egypt particularly, great numbers of Christian men and women went out into the desert to practise religious exercises and austerity. Monastic austerity on the Egyptian model was known to western Europe in the fifth century A.D.

One of the central figures of the history of development of monasticism in Europe is Saint Benedict who founded a monastery at Monte Cassino in southern Italy. Benedict was the abbot of that monastery for a period of fourteen years. During this period he prepared a body of rules which in time became practically the only monastic rules in western Europe. St. Benedict discouraged the solitary life and extreme self-torture, and enjoined the monks to live a community life doing social, economic and intellectual work. One of the prominent followers of St. Benedict was Pope Gregory the Great, who was the first monk to become a pope of Rome (590 A.D.).

The influence of the Benedictine monks upon the history of Europe is very great. The monasteries or abbeys were as far as possible self-supporting. The work of the monks included religious contemplation, cultivation, clearing of forests, building of roads and distribution of food, clothes and medicine. During the Dark Ages following the dissolution of the Roman Empire, the monasteries were the only places where people could expect relief and consolation, and

where some amount of intellectual and educational work was kept alive.

Though the monasteries were the chief instruments in civilizing and educating the Teutonic races, the monks were mostly fanatical Christians who tried to suppress paganism by violent means. In later times, special kinds of Military Order arose among the monks to wage war against the Mussalmans in the Holy Land and in Spain. Two of these orders were: Teutonic Brothers of the Sword and the Knight Templars of St. John. Many of them joined the Crusades and used violent means to convert the pagans of Germany and eastern Europe to Christianity.

## CHAPTER XVI

### THE GERMANIC INVASIONS AND THE FALL OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE IN THE WEST

The invasions of the Barbarians may be regarded as the immediate cause of the fall of the Western Roman Empire. As a result of such invasions the great and highly centralized Roman Empire became a group of distinct political entities. The *Pax Romana* was destroyed, and for a period of about five hundred years political anarchy continued, and has been called the 'Dark Ages'.

Nevertheless, the 'Dark Ages' were not altogether dark. Though no great cultural manifestations were existent, the Roman-Teutonic fusion exerted a tremendous influence on the future development of the society and government of the Middle Ages. It has been said that the great service which the barbarians rendered was the service of the destruction of what had been already rotten. The barbarians were not in a position to appreciate Roman art, architecture and literature, but they brought with them new ideas and new vigour into the stagnant water of later Roman civilization—the secret of political history which Rome had forgotten, the passion for individual initiative which Rome had suppressed, the habit of rearing large families which Rome had chosen to neglect and despise'.

Who were the barbarians? Their early history is practically unknown. But they belong to that group of Indo-European peoples called the Nordics. About 1000 B.C. they came from Scandinavia or from Asia and occupied Central Europe north of the Danube and east of the Rhine. They

\* Fisher's *History of Europe*, p. 109.

were divided into numerous tribes living mostly in little villages. Politically, the tribes were divided into counties (*gaue*) which, in turn, were sub-divided into smaller groups called *hundreds*. The *hundreds* were so named as each of them perhaps furnished one hundred warriors. Besides, each tribe had an assembly or *folkmoot* which met to declare peace or war or elect the tribal chief.

The early Germans had all the vices and all the virtues of the barbarians. They hunted and fished, and when not engaged in either, passed their time in gambling and fighting with one another. This sort of vigorous life and the worship of the wild gods such as Woden (the sky god) and Thor (the thunder god) made the Germans cruel and courageous warriors. Their heaven was called *walhalla* where their great warriors were believed to enjoy themselves by drinking wine from the skulls of their defeated enemies. But the Germans were hospitable to their guests, faithful to their friends, and loyal to their oaths until they were corrupted by Roman vices.\*

#### EARLY GERMANIC MIGRATIONS—THE GOTHs

The Germans could only practise the rudimentary forms of agriculture which did not provide for an increasing population. Besides, there was flood, draught and famine which made them restless and caused them to look with envy at the rich corn fields of the northern Roman provinces. So numbers of them began to cross the borders. Speaking broadly, there were two main diverging groups of Germanic migrations which came into contact with the Roman empire. The first group wandered south and west while the second moved eastward and descended upon the

\* The two principal sources of information about the early Germans are: (1) Julius Caesar's *Commentaries*, and (2) Tacitus' Treatises known as the *Germania* (98 A.D.).

coast of the Black Sea. It was against the first group—the West Germans—that the Roman generals such as Merius, Julius Caesar, Drusus, Tiberius and Germanicus fought. But after the destruction of the army of Varus (9 A.D.) the Romans abandoned the hope of conquering the West Germans and protected the Empire from the German peril by building a long wall along the frontier. Nevertheless a process of slow and peaceful blending of the two races went on and the relations between them were mostly peaceful till about the close of the second century A.D.

The period of Germanic invasion really began in the third century when the second group of the Germanic tribes—the eastern or Gothic branch—entered on the scene. The Goths had two distinct divisions—the Ostrogoths (or East Goths) who dwelt north of the Black Sea, and the Visigoths (or West Goths) who occupied the regions north of the lower Danube. It was Visigoths who, separated from the Romans only by the Danube, became the first barbarians to invade the Roman Empire successfully. They fell upon the Roman province of Dacia, the country now called Roumania and Transylvania. The Romans attempted to hold them back, but ultimately the Emperor Claudius was compelled to withdraw all Roman civil officials from that province and allow the Visigoths to settle down within the Empire under their own rules and their own laws. From that time until the end of the fourth century there were alternate fightings and compromises between the Romans and the barbarians. Sometimes former invaders, having settled down within the Empire, fought for Rome against later comers. Thus, not only were the Roman frontier provinces seen by the barbarian colonists but barbarian officers infiltrated into Roman civil and military departments. There were even inter-marriages between the two races and Roman life became barbarized

in many ways. It was during these years that the Goths were converted to Christianity by one of their own number, named Ulfilas, who also translated the Bible into the Gothic tongue in order that the Goths might be able to read it. Unfortunately the Goths accepted the new faith in its Arian form. Arius of Alexandria promulgated the heretic view that though Christ was divine he had been begotten of God and was distinct from and inferior in divinity to his Father. As such there could be no co-operation between Arianism and the orthodox Roman Catholic church which asserted the view of God as One and Indivisible possessing three divine personalities, namely, God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Ghost. Arianism was condemned by the Council of Nicaea in which Athanasius, a deacon of Alexandria, clarified the doctrine of the Trinity with great eloquence.

#### THE HUNS AND THE VISIGOTHS—THE BATTLE OF ADRIANOPLE

About the close of the fourth century A.D. there was a change of relations between the Germans and the Romans. Up to this time the Romans were able to prevent the barbarians from violently occupying the Roman territory. But now a new force appeared on the scene. This was the Huns, a Mongolian folk of Central Asia who began to pour upon Eastern and South-eastern Europe and pushed the Goths from behind within the limits of the Empire.

The Huns were short in stature, with flat noses and black eyes buried deep in their heads; and they made themselves more hideous by tattooing their faces. They were homeless nomads who wandered on horseback from place to place living on vegetables and half-raw meat made eatable by being placed under the saddles of their horses. Their wives and children dwelt in waggons. In short the Huns

lived almost like wild animals, had no idea of culture, and thought nothing of vice or virtue. Because of their uncouth appearance the Germans and the Romans alike regarded the Huns as children of the witches and evil-spirits of the desert.

In 375 A.D. the invading army of the Huns crossed the Volga and fell upon the Ostrogoths who were completely overwhelmed. The Visigoths, in despair asked the Roman Emperor if they might cross the Danube and live within the boundaries of the Empire. The permission was readily granted on condition that they gave up all their weapons before they crossed the Danube. The Goths agreed to the terms and settled on the lands south of the Danube. For some time things went well, but the Roman officials soon began to oppress the Visigoths and ultimately to sell their wives and children as slaves. At last the Visigoths rebelled, and in the decisive battle of Adrianople (378) defeated the Romans and slew their Emperor, Valens.\*

The battle of Adrianople marked the beginning of the conquest of the western part of the Roman Empire by the Germans. However the Romans were not yet to lose their greatness. Theodosius, the new Emperor of the East, succeeded in subduing the Visigoths by adopting a wise policy of conciliation, and employed many of them in the Roman army. He also united the Eastern and Western Empire under his single rule, and governed it in such a way that he deserved the title of the 'Great' by which he is known in history.

#### STILICIO, ALARIC AND ATILA

When Theodosius was dead the Empire was again divided between his two sons. The East was given to Arcadius with

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\* The battle established for a thousand year the predominance of the cavalry army in European warfare.

his capital at Constantinople, and the West to Honorius with his capital at Ravenna. Both the emperors were weak; taking advantage of this position the Visigoths again became restless. Many of them had been Roman mercenaries. They were now discontented because their pay was long in arrears, and most of all, they wanted homes, not military service. They rose in revolt, chose Alaric as their king and laid waste the provinces of Greece. The Eastern Emperor was indifferent. There was a great general at that time in the service of the Western Emperor. His name was Stilicho, a Vandal by birth. Stilicho crossed the Adriatic and forced Alaric to retreat northward for a time. Stilicho again defeated Alaric at Pollenza and checked the invasion of Italy by other barbarians. But in spite of all his success he was ultimately accused of plotting to become Emperor himself and was assassinated. Many of his soldiers were also butchered by the fanatical Romans, and those who escaped went to Alaric for help.

On the death of Stilicho, who was the only man who could defeat Alaric, the Visigoths once more attacked Italy and fell upon Rome. For the first time since Hannibal a hostile army was before her gates. The Roman Senators now sent ambassadors to Alaric and persuaded him to go away for an enormous ransom. But the foolish Emperor Honorius, personally secure in Ravenna, offended Alaric again and again. In 410 the Gothic leader attacked Rome once more and plundered the city for six days. Then Alaric marched southwards to conquer Sicily. But before he could carry out his plan he died of fever in southern Italy (411 A.D.), and was buried in the bed of a small river called Busento.

After the death of Alaric the Visigoths crossed southern Gaul and entered Spain. It was in Spain that they set up kingdom of their own after driving away the Vandals. The



kingdom of the Visigoths remained the most powerful of the German kingdoms until the development of the Ostrogoths under Theodoric in Italy.

### THE HUNS

The Huns were an even more dreadful enemy of the Empire than the Visigoths. Between 430 and 441 the great Hun leader Attila called 'the scourge of God' ravaged the provinces of the lower Danube, overran a great part of the Balkan peninsula and compelled the eastern Emperor, Theodosius II to come to terms by agreeing to pay an annual subsidy. Then, Attila turned his attention to the West. The Romans and the Visigoths alike saw that their only chance of safety lay in uniting their forces against the new invader. And in the great battle of Chalons, the united forces defeated the Huns and compelled them to recross the Rhine. In the following year however Attila suddenly invaded Italy. At the time of this trouble the Pope of Rome, Leo the Great, came forward as the leader of a despairing people and persuaded Attila to quit Italy without attacking the city. In the following year (453 A.D.) Attila died, and with his death the Hun empire fell rapidly to pieces.

### THE VANDALS

The Visigoths and the Huns were not the only enemies whom the Romans had to fight. Seeing the weakness of the Empire new hordes of Germans had advanced from all sides. The Vandals forced their way into Gaul, thence southward into Spain. When the Visigoths advanced into Spain, the Vandals crossed over to Africa and founded a kingdom there with its capital at Carthage. Their chief,

Genseric built a fleet with which he sailed across the Mediterranean, captured Rome (455 A.D.), and plundered the city for fourteen days and nights. Genseric carried away all that was left of the treasures of Rome and many

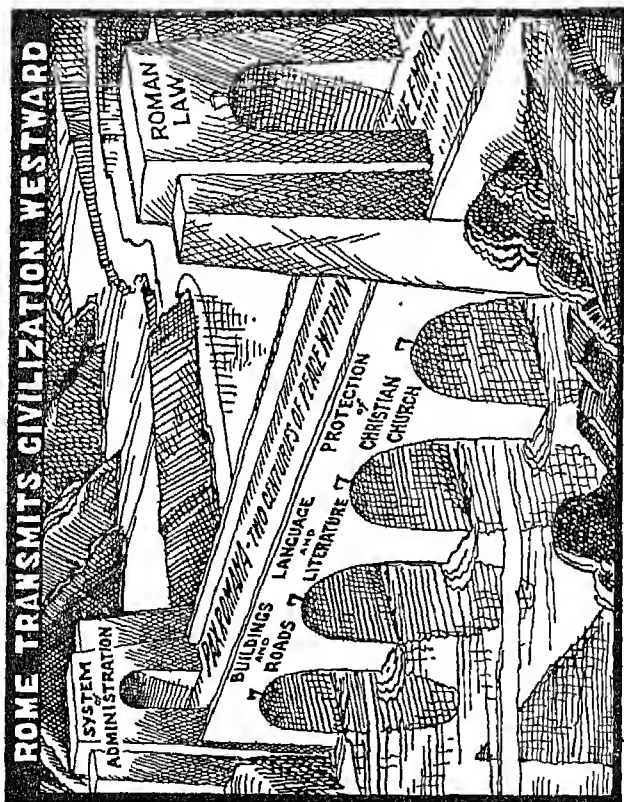


FIG. 16

thousands of Romans were sold as slaves in the marketplace of Carthage, the city which the Romans had once levelled to the dust.

## THE BURGANDIANS

The Burgandians were, comparatively speaking, a peace-loving people. They were pushed from behind by the Huns, and after various fortunes they occupied the territory south of the Lake of Geneva and extended their power up to the Mediterranean shore. Ultimately they came into conflict with the Franks on the north by whom they were finally conquered and absorbed.

## ANGLES AND SAXONS

Towards the beginning of the fifth century or even earlier, other Germanic tribes, Jutes, Angles and Saxons, the ancestors of the present English—crossed the North Sea and the English Channel and made themselves masters of the Roman province of Britain after subduing the native Celtic population. The Celts made a determined resistance against the barbarians but they were unsuccessful. By the close of the sixth century the new invaders established many small kingdoms throughout the island, which are sometimes designated, though inaccurately, as the Heptarchy.

## THE FRANKS

While the Jutes, Angles and Saxons were making themselves masters of Britain, their kinsmen, the Franks, attacked the province of Gaul (modern France), already laid waste by the Vandals and Huns, and established a kingdom there under Clovis. We shall have to speak more of the Frankish kingdom later. Another Germanic tribe of considerable importance were the Lombards. The Lombards were the last barbarians who established themselves within the bounds of the empire. About 600 A.D. they made themselves masters of northern Italy. The kingdom of the Lombards

was overthrown by the Franks under Charles the Great in 774 A.D. But the region north of the Po has ever since been called Lombardy after them.

### 'THE FALL OF ROME'

It is useless to follow further the confused movements of the innumerable Germanic tribes who molested every part of western Europe. In short, it may be said that by the middle of the fifth century the Roman Empire of the West was in shreds. Though there were still emperors at Rome they were, for the most part, weak and worthless, and often puppets in the hands of successive German commanders of German mercenaries. These commanders called themselves Patricians.

In 474 A.D. Patrician Orestes put his young son Romulus Augustus on the throne. Two years later the German barbarians rebelled under their commander Odoacer (or Odovaker) and deposed Romulus Augustus. Then, Odoacer wrote a letter to the Eastern Emperor in which he said that there was no necessity for two Emperors, and asked him to take over the sovereignty of the whole Empire, only making Odoacer the governor of the Western provinces. The Emperor had to agree to what he could not avoid. Thus the title of the Emperor of the West ceased until, about three hundred years later, it was assumed once more by Charles the Great, King of the Franks.

### THE OSTROGOTHIC KINGDOM IN ITALY—THEODORIC

The feeble government of Odoacer in Italy lasted only seventeen years. After this period it was brought to a close by the invasion of the Ostrogoths. When Alaric led the Visigoths into Italy, the Ostrogoths remained in their lands on the Danube. Since that time they had prospered

much and occupied Macedonia. Theodoric, the ambitious leader of the Ostrogoths, next quarrelled with the emperor and marched on Constantinople. To get rid of him the emperor commissioned Theodoric to set out for Italy to punish Odoacer who was defying the emperor. Odoacer offered a strong resistance but was killed by treachery.

Theodoric now became the undisputed master of Italy which he ruled for thirty-three years. During this period there was such quiet and prosperity as Italy had not known since the happy era of the Antonines. The Ostrogoths and other Germans were allowed to live under their own Germanic laws, and the Italians under the Roman law administered by Italian officials. Every one could bring his complaints to the Emperor. Though himself an Arian, Theodoric tolerated all sects of Christians, and protected the unpopular Jews as sternly as the Christians. He also made an excellent financial organization by which the royal treasury was filled and at the same time the burden of taxation on the people was much relieved. During the reign of Theodoric the only regret of the people of Italy was that the Ostrogoths had not come at an earlier period. The kingdom established by Theodoric lasted only twenty-seven years after his death. Afterwards, Italy was re-conquered by a great general of Justinian, the Eastern Roman Emperor.

#### THE EASTERN ROMAN EMPIRE—JUSTINIAN

It is necessary here to speak a few words about the great Eastern Emperor, Justinian, whose accession (527 A.D.) marked the beginning of a glorious period of Byzantine history. While Rome was being dismembered by the barbarians, the emperors in the East somehow maintained their realm. Justinian brought about what is termed the 'Imperial Restoration'. By this term was meant the revival

of the power of the Empire and the recovery from the barbarians of several of the provinces of the West. He sent his general Belisarius to North Africa where a series of attacks against the Vandals led to the capture of Carthage and the end of the Vandal kingdom. With Africa under his control, Belisarius overran Sicily, stormed Naples and was about to enter Rome. But Justinian grew jealous of his power and gave the command to Narses as successor to Belisarius. This step prevented unity of action and delayed success for a time. Belisarius, however, triumphed and captured Rome. Then he was recalled by the Emperor, leaving Narses to complete the destruction of the Ostrogoths and to make Italy a province of the Byzantine empire. Narses demolished the Ostrogothic rule so completely that the later history of the Ostrogoths is almost unknown.

Justinian's generals also made a partial reconquest of Spain and re-established Byzantine control as a sea-power in the greater part of the Mediterranean. But when Justinian tried to extend his power in the East he met with reverses and humiliation. He began by fighting against the Persians whom ultimately he had to buy off when they had captured Dara, ravaged Syria and occupied Antioch in quick succession.

More than his conquests, Justinian's permanent legacy to the world was his great codification of Roman Law. The three works—The Code, the Digest and the Institutes—collectively called the *Corpus Juris Civilis* (Code of Civil Law) became the basis for all legal systems of modern European countries. Justinian spent vast sums of money in erecting churches, the most magnificent of which was the church of St. Sophia in Constantinople. Under him Byzantine architecture took its final form, its principal characteristics being the cupola and the round arch. The temporary revival of the Roman Empire under Justinian was also one of the main

causes of its decline. It wrecked the financial resources of the Empire. Taxation became so heavy and abnormal that it crippled trade and industry of every kind. During his reign there broke out what is known as the *Nika Riot* in which the mob set fire to the city of Constantinople and wanted to change the dynasty. With the aid of his beautiful and talented wife Theodora who announced her intention to die as empress rather than flee from the city Justinian ultimately suppressed the revolt. Thirty-five thousand of the rioters were put to the sword.

Although Justinian was successful for a time in uniting together the old Roman Empire there were no permanent results of this union. On the other hand, his foreign policy left the empire weaker than he found it. The reconquest of Africa and Italy was an expensive affair in respect of money and men. While Justinian's generals were carrying on campaigns in Africa, Italy and Spain, the Persians from the south repeatedly threatened the frontiers, while the Lombards, the Avars, and the Slavie and Mongolian peoples made settlements within the Empire. Justinian had often to buy off these invaders which meant a heavy drain on the imperial treasury and ruthless taxation on the people. It may be added that the destruction of the Ostrogothic rule in Italy by Justinian made it easy for the Lombards and other Danubian tribes to fall upon Italy and plunder the country. 'Justinian closed a reign of unparalleled magnificence as a gloomy pietist, whose despotism drained and crushed the people who had grown to abhor his very name'.\*

Justinian's death was followed by the decline of the Roman Empire in the East. The conquests of the Arabs cut off large morsels from the Empire with the result that the Court of Constantinople became less and less Roman

\* Oman—*The Dark Ages*, p. 110

and more and more Greek and Oriental. Hence from that time the empire is often called the *Byzantine* or *Greek Empire*.

The Byzantine Empire continued for about nine hundred years after the death of Justinian. During this long period it rendered a great service to European civilization. It checked the advance of the Arabs and the Turks who were repeatedly threatening Europe from across the Bosphorus. Justinian had closed and dispersed the schools of Athens in order to set up a new school of Greek culture and learning in Constantinople. It was the new school at Constantinople which was able to preserve the valuable writings of Greek scholars during the 'Dark Days' of the Middle ages. For several centuries Constantinople was the centre for the spread of religion and civilization among the barbaric Slavs and its laws and government served as ideals for the rulers of the West for many centuries to come. We may say in the words of Davis, 'The Byzantine hierarchy long justified its existence by providing its millions a more general enforcement of law and order, a surer administration of justice, a more genuine effort to make government exist for the benefit of the governed than in any other Christian or Moslem land during the early middle ages, save possibly in the best days of the personal rule of Charlemagne, and in the reigns of one or two of the ablest Abbasside Kalifs.\*'

\* Davis—*A History of the Near East*, p. 67.



## CHAPTER XVII

### THE MIDDLE AGES

For the sake of convenience, the whole course of history is usually divided into three periods—the Ancient, the Medieval, and the Modern. Many historians regard the deposition (476 A.D.) of the last Roman Emperor of the West as the end of the period of ancient history. The next one thousand years or so ending with the fall of the Roman Empire of the East (1453 A.D.) are generally called the 'Middle Ages'. The Modern period extends from the close of the medieval period down to the present time.\*

It should, however, be observed that the above arrangement of history into clear-cut sections with plain dividing lines between them, is purely arbitrary. The movements of history are continuous, and no definite date can be chosen as marking the end of one period and the beginning of the next. In other words, there can never be any complete breach between historical periods, but one period shades into another by a long and ceaseless process of change of which the people who live in the time of transition often remain unconscious. Nevertheless, it would be difficult to make sense of so vast and complex a subject as human

\* There is no agreement among historians as to the dates of marking the Middle Ages and Modern times. Some of them begin the Middle Ages from 375 A.D., the year of the successful invasion of the Roman province by the Germans, and others with Muhammad's *hijra* from Mecca in 622 A.D. Similarly, some regard 1492 A.D. the year of the discovery of America by Columbus, as the beginning of modern history. There are others still who think that the French Revolution which definitely brings about the separation of the State from the Church is the event marking the close of the Middle Ages and the beginning of Modern times.

history if we were not to break it into smaller parts and point out the chief interests and events of each, in order to understand them better.

Until recently the majority of historians regarded the medieval period of history as a long night of complete darkness and ignorance, but modern research has exploded this pessimistic view. It is true that the medieval period was a decline in many respects. It saw the fall of Greek culture and the Roman imperial system; the overthrow of the Sassanian Empire and Zoroastrianism in Persia; the end of Hindu political hegemony in India, and the rapid movements of the barbarians with the consequent destruction of social order and the sufferings of people all around. But this is only the scamy side of the medieval age, and we should not judge an age merely by its crimes and scandals. If we take stock, the medieval period can hardly be called sterile. It produced splendid styles of architecture and sculpture, the Christian church, the vernacular languages and universities of Europe, the splendour of Islam and the marvellous growth of the Muslim Empire. On the whole the medieval period created more than it destroyed and left as a legacy to the next age some formative forces and basic institutions which have been of enormous value in the way of human progress.

The two major events of early medieval history on the European stage were: (i) the rise of Christianity and the Church, and (ii) the invasions of the Germanic barbarians in Central and Western Europe. The Church, with the rapid spread of Christianity and the Pope of Rome at the head, worked as the bond of a common religious organization and saved society from entire dissolution and despair. As a result of the Germanic invasions the old political order disappeared, and numerous small kingdoms sprang up which strove among themselves for the rich Roman provinces.

In the eighth century the scene changed from these small kingdoms to the great Frankish Empire. With the coronation of Charles the Great the people came to recognize the possibility of the revival of the old Roman Empire in the West and the blending of Roman ideals of order and government with the Teutonic spirit of freedom.

The vast Frankish empire, however, did not long survive the death of Charles the Great. The next two centuries may really be called the 'Dark Ages' of European history. All elements of civilization and government went down beneath the onrush of barbarian hordes and there was immeasurable suffering and lawless confusion all around. But it was out of this confusion that a new socio-political organization was born. This was *feudalism* which, with its strong castles and armed knights, stopped the advancing tide of barbarian invasions from all sides. When feudalism served its purpose it had to give way to other new forces which transfused fresh blood into European life. From the twelfth century onwards the Church came to grip with her own creature—the Holy Roman Empire, and began to lose her all-pervading spiritual and secular authority. It was about this time that town-life which had suffered a serious set-back during the barbarian invasions, began to revive. And this revival gave birth to the important middle class which has ever since formed the back-bone of modern European life. In the meantime a new intellectual reaction began against the 'Age of Faith'. Gradually, the spirit of nationalism made itself felt and began to shape the modern state system of England, France, Spain, Germany and Italy.

Things were, however, different in south-eastern Europe. There the Eastern Roman Empire received new strength under the able Emperor Justinian, and continued to maintain itself strong enough to protect Europe for centuries against invasions from the East. Its fortress capital, Constantinople,

remained the wealthiest city of the Occidental world and the home of a highly cosmopolitan culture known as the Byzantine culture, which supplied some of the chief elements of medieval civilization in Europe.

Like Europe, the Orient also was in ferment. Simultaneously with the reorganization of Europe by Charlemagne, there arose in Arabia a new religion, Islam, which arrested the forward march of Christianity in the east and west of Europe. The culture which, in the form of Hellenism, had dominated the concluding era of the ancient period of Eastern Europe and Western Asia, now gave place to Muslim culture. Muslim armies spread in all directions from China to Spain. Jerusalem, the Holy City of the Christians, fell into their hands, with the result that throughout the Middle Ages wars continued, with intervals, between the Christians and the Muslims, between the Cross and the Crescent. These wars are known as the Crusades.

From the close of the fifth century onward the whole of Central Asia was in turmoil on account of the constant migrations of tribes who advanced from all directions. About this time the White Huns came through the north-western frontiers of India. In spite of the resistance offered by Skandagupta they settled within the country and intermingled with the governing classes of the Hindus. Anarchy and confusion prevailed. In the seventh century Harshavardhan of Kanauj, after prolonged wars, established such peace and justice as could be compared with that of the reign of Charlemagne, and such perfect religious toleration as was yet unknown in the West. But disorder revived after the death of Harsha. Still up to the end of the first millennium of the Christian era, India not only preserved her high ancient culture but propagated it far beyond its frontiers in lands extending from Persia to the Chinese Sea and from icy Siberia to the islands of Java and Borneo.

Thus a Greater India was formed, 'politically as little organized as Greater Greece, but morally equally homogeneous'. With the conquest of Northern India by the Muslims there was again a fusion of culture which brought the dawn of a new era in India.

Meanwhile, a storm-cloud was gathering in the heart of Asia of which Europe knew nothing and India knew nothing. It burst in the twelfth century and brought in new historical forces. So far the supremacy of the world, excluding eastern Asia, had been principally shared by the Semites and Indo-Europeans. Now the third great division of human races—the Mongols—appeared on the scene. The Mongols dominated northern and western Asia, China and most of Eastern Europe till the fifteenth century.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### THE FRANKS LEAD THE WEST—THE EMPIRE OF CHARLEMAGNE

Of all the Germanic tribes who hurled themselves upon the Roman empire the Franks played the most important part in the future development of Europe. This was because of two principal reasons. In the first place, the Franks did not, like their kinsmen, the Goths, Vandals and Lombards, leave their country and go about in search of new lands. They kept what they had and went on adding to it. In other words the Frankish movement was an expansion and not a migration. Secondly, the Franks early received the blessing of Roman Catholic church and adopted her culture. This fusion of Christian and Germanic ideas produced new social and political institutions and formed a most important factor in the transition from the ancient to the medieval world.

#### THE MEROVINGIANS: CLOVIS

The early history of the Franks is obscure. They were a people of tall stature who fought half-naked, on foot, and lived in various groups forming a loose confederation. By the middle of the fifth century two chief Frankish groups emerged—the Salians living along the river Sala (the old name for river Yssel), and the Ripuarians who occupied the bank (ripa=bank) of the Rhine. The most powerful of the Salian Franks was Clovis. He united the Frankish tribes after murdering the king of the Ripuarians and became the first of a line of kings known as the *Merovingians*. We

need not here follow Clovis' career of conquest, how he drove the Visigoths out of Southern Gaul and defeated the Alamanni and other tribes. But there was one event in his reign which was more important than all his conquests. Clovis married Clotilda, a Christian princess of Burgundy and through her intervention he, with three thousand of the chief men of the Franks, was converted to the Roman Catholic faith. This conversion had far-reaching results. It may be recalled that the Goths and the Vandals had also accepted Christianity, but that was Christianity in the Arian form. The Arians maintained the heretic view that Christ the Son was by nature inferior to God the Father. As such there could be no co-operation between Arians and the orthodox Roman church which asserted absolute equality between the Son and the Father. Clovis led the Franks into the fold of the Roman Catholic church, and with this help added to his own ability, he united Gaul into one Frankish kingdom.

#### THE MAYORS OF THE PALACE: THE CAROLINGIANS

After the death of Clovis his descendants—the Merovingians—ruled the Franks for more than one hundred and fifty years. Their reigns were filled with murders, crimes and bestial immoralities of every sort. The later Merovingians were so weak that they were quite unfit to perform the duties of rulers in that rough age. The royal power was exercised practically by the chief ministers who were called 'Mayors of the Palace'. During the seventh century the office of these ministers became hereditary in the famous family of the Carolingians. One of the Mayors of this family, Charles Martel, did an invaluable service to Europe by stopping the advance of the Arabs who, after overrunning Spain, had made their way through the Pyrenees.

In 732 Charles met the invaders at Tours and utterly defeated them. If the result of the battle had been otherwise the Quran must have replaced the Bible as the sacred book of the West.

Charles Martel had two sons, Carloman and Pippin. They became Mayors of the Palace upon their father's death. A nominal Merovingian king was still on the throne having no mark of royalty except his long hair and flowing beard and a beggarly income as decided by the Mayors. Pippin now decided to end the farce of having a 'Do-nothing' king by assuming the royal title himself; and when his brother went off to Italy to become a monk he usurped the royal throne. The Pope readily gave his sanction and blessing to this usurpation as he badly needed Pippin's support against the Lombards who were repeatedly threatening Rome. In return for the Pope's services Pippin invaded Italy, defeated the Lombards and made a gift to the Pope of the lands which they had recently occupied. This gift is known as the 'Donation of Pippin', and it marks the foundation of the Papal State and the true beginning of the temporal power of the papacy.

The reign of Pippin is important for two things. First, he strengthened the alliance between the Franks and the Papacy. As a result of this alliance kingship had now a religious sanction which added power to the Carolingian dynasty. The king came to be regarded by the Franks as God's representative on earth. Here we can trace the theory of the Divine Right of Kings—a theory which had its origin in the West from Alexander the Great and which, in later times, powerfully influenced the reign of the Stuart kings of England and precipitated the French Revolution. Secondly, hitherto Popes had been chiefly concerned with the kingdom of Heaven. But from the precedent of the coronation of Pippin by a clergyman, the later Popes



claimed a share in the makings of kings and emperors and thus exercised a powerful influence, for good or evil, on the practical politics of Europe.

### CHARLEMAGNE, THE GREAT CAROLINGIAN

The son and successor of Pippin was Charles the Great, usually known as Charlemagne—the most noted figure of the Middle Ages and one of the outstanding rulers of all time. The forty seven years of Charlemagne's reign may be reviewed broadly under three heads—his conquests, his administration and his relation to the Papacy.

(1) *Charlemagne's Conquests.*—Charlemagne made more than fifty military campaigns winning great victories and extending his dominion in all directions. His first move was directed against the Saxons between the Rhine and the Elbe. The Saxons were still heathens who made frequent plundering raids upon Frankish territory. Charlemagne carried on a war against them with great fury. He destroyed the sacred places of their idols and compelled them to submit to his authority. But their submission was at first merely formal. The Saxons detested Christianity. They murdered the Christian priests and renewed their raids as soon as they would get any opportunity. At length Charlemagne resorted to extreme measures. He ordered the massacre of about 4500 Saxon captives in a single day. Shortly afterwards he transported large numbers of Franks into Saxon territory and scattered 10,000 rebel families throughout his empire. The Saxons were to become Christians, and those who refused to be baptized were either put to death or otherwise punished heavily.

In the intervals of his Saxon campaigns, Charlemagne overcame the Lombards, the old enemies of the Popes of Rome, in North Italy, conquered Bavaria, forced the

Bohemians to pay him tribute, checked the Danes and extended his empire to the Danube by a victory over the Avars. He also crossed the Pyrenees and drove the Moors back as far south as the river Ebro thus continuing the work of his grand-father, Charles Martel. By the time Charlemagne completed his conquering expeditions his empire included all of modern France, Belgium, Holland, Switzerland, the northern part of Spain, the greater part of Germany, and Italy as far south as Rome.

(2) *Charlemagne's Administration*.—Charlemagne was not only a great conqueror but he was also a great organizer who ruled his dominions with a strong hand. The two chief difficulties which confronted every ruler of those times were: first, a scanty revenue on account of the absence of a system of taxation such as had existed in the Roman empire; second, the selfish and overpowerful officials who were apt to disregard the interests of the sovereign and the state. Charlemagne tried to fill his treasury by increasing the products of the royal estates. For this purpose he made elaborate regulations so that 'not even a turnip or an egg which was due to him should be withheld'.\* He would also take the lion's share of the booty taken in war and of the fines levied in the courts.

Charlemagne compelled the rebellious local officials to submit and devised means of controlling them for the future. The majority of these officials were known as counts who ruled small districts; and some of them were dukes who ruled duchies comprising several counties. The counts and dukes held their office for life though Charlemagne could appoint and remove whomsoever he pleased. The Emperor depended a good deal upon the bishops in the localities—a dangerous feature which often

\* Robinson.

led to confusion between political and religious matters. The officials on the borders, who were constantly ready in a state of military preparation for defence, were called margraves or counts of the marches. There was a special class of officials called Missi Dominici. The missi were the royal deputies who acted as links between the central and the local governments. They traversed throughout the realm, and were to see that the laws were obeyed, the dues and taxes properly collected and that local officials did their work properly. It was Charlemagne's custom to hold general Assemblies or Diets consisting of the nobles and bishops, and with their approval to issue Capitularies or Edicts. The capitularies were virtually laws in which the emperor stated his opinion concerning all important matters of the empire—how the country should be governed, how education should be improved and how the army should be organized and made more effective. Education received the special attention of Charlemagne. He established a Palace School at Aachen (Aix-la-Chapelle) and assembled round him wise monks and scholars from the West and the East. One of them was Alcuin who came from York and organized the Palace School. From the East the great Caliph Haroun-al-Raschid sent an embassy to him with an elephant 'Abulahaz' as a gift. Charlemagne could scarcely write his name, but he encouraged Greek and Latin. In like manner he encouraged architecture and the decorative arts by the building and ornamentation of churches. Trade with the Near East flourished and the Jews and Syrian traders were well treated. During his reign there was what has been called a Carolingian Renaissance which foreshadowed, though dimly, the Italian Renaissance of later times.

(3) *Charlemagne and the Church.*—Charlemagne was fond of St. Augustine's famous book *City of God*, which brought to his mind the idea of making 'a state of which

God would approve and in which God's will should rule'. This was quite in keeping with the medieval theory according to which the Church and State should go hand in hand in governing the life of the people. Charlemagne, however, regarded himself, and not the Pope, as the supreme instrument of God's will. He, therefore, presided at church councils, decided questions of doctrine, directed the discipline of the clergy and converted the heathens. In fact, Charlemagne desired to establish an empire like that of Rome and for this purpose he wanted control over the church as a means of welding his diverse possessions into one. Here it must be observed that though the conception of his Empire was Rome, his authority rested not upon Imperial Tradition but upon his power as King of the Franks.

Soon, however, an opportunity offered itself to Charlemagne for getting the title of the Roman Emperor, which had ceased to exist. There were at least two great weak points in the position of the Pope at that time. In the first place, the Byzantine Emperor and the King of the Lombards wanted to control all Italy. Secondly, the office of the Pope was elective, and the people of Rome often made life uncomfortable for a Pope whom they did not like. Such was the case with Pope Leo III who was given a sound beating for his immoral life and harsh rule. Leo was driven out of Rome. He then appealed for help to Charlemagne to whom he had already sent the Keys of St. Peter's grave and the flag of the city of Rome as tokens of his homage and fidelity. Through Charlemagne's intervention Leo became Pope again after freeing himself of all accusations.

The verdict in favour of Pope Leo III was a piece of good fortune for Charlemagne himself. On Christmas day 800 A.D. Charlemagne was in Rome. As he knelt in prayer in St. Peter's, the grateful Pope placed a crown on his head

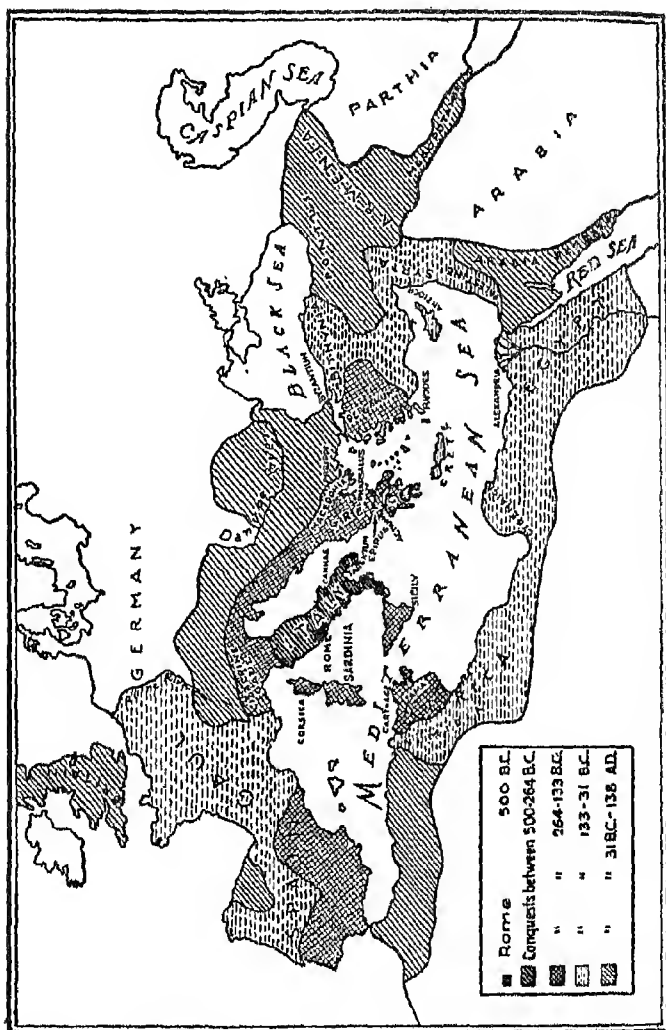


FIG. 17. THE ROMAN WORLD.

and the assembled populace hailed him as 'Augustus, crowned of God, great and pacific Emperor of the Romans'. Charlemagne feared that the Pope's act might lead to hostile relations with Constantinople. But he finally concluded a treaty by which the Byzantine Emperor recognized him as Emperor of the West. Charlemagne managed the affairs of the Church without raising serious papal objections. But the coronation of Charlemagne in Rome opened a new page in the history of Europe. From that time the Pope recrowned the successors of Charlemagne after their usual coronation at Aachen, and by a series of precedents established the papal claim to crown, if not make, emperors. It may be said, therefore, that the germs of the later struggle between the Empire and the Papacy lay in the method of Charlemagne's coronation. There was another effect of Charlemagne's coronation. In the language of Dean Church it 'finally determined, though it did not at once accomplish, the separation of East and West, of Greek and Latin Christianity'.

#### DEATH OF CHARLEMAGNE

Charlemagne died in 814 A.D. in the seventy-second year of his life. The immediate result of his work might appear negligible, as signs of the disruption of the Empire appeared shortly after his death and feudalism soon became a serious rival to the type of imperialism which he had tried to set up. But taking the long view it may be said that Charlemagne completed a task, begun by his predecessors, of blending the Germans and the Romans into one, and his empire presented a new ideal in politics, that is, the ideal of a union of all Christendom in one Church and State.

## BREAK-UP OF THE CAROLINGIAN EMPIRE

The empire of Charlemagne did not long survive his death. It was bound to break up on account of the same causes that led to the ruin of the Roman Empire four centuries previously—internal weakness and invasions from outside.

(i) *Internal weakness.*—The internal weakness arose from two factors. First, there was no means of speedy communication between the different parts of the vast empire to make the central authority effective everywhere. Charlemagne overcame this difficulty by his great energy and commanding personality; but his weak successors could not. As a result, numerous independent or semi-independent agricultural lords grew up who took more and more governing privileges for themselves. So a strong centralized power became more and more impossible. The second factor was the fatal Frankish system of partitioning the kingdom equally among all the sons. This led to divisions and redivisions of the territory and continual dynastic wars and disintegration.

Following the Frankish practice Charlemagne planned to divide his territories among his three sons. But two of his sons died before their father, so that Louis, the only surviving son, succeeded to the whole of the Frankish dominion as Louis the Pious. Louis was a feeble ruler, more fitted for the monastery than for the throne. He could not control his ambitious sons who became greedy for power even during their father's life-time. On his death civil wars and divisions and redivisions of territories followed until the Treaty of Verdun (843 A.D.) settled the matter for ten years. By this treaty the Frankish territories were divided among the three surviving sons of Louis. Charles the Bald got the western part of the Frankish dominion;

Louis kept the eastern part; and Lothar, the eldest, kept the central strip across Europe from the North Sea to the Mediterranean including Aachen and Rome. Lothar also received the title of Emperor. Thus the Treaty of Verdun marks the beginning of the map of modern Europe. The

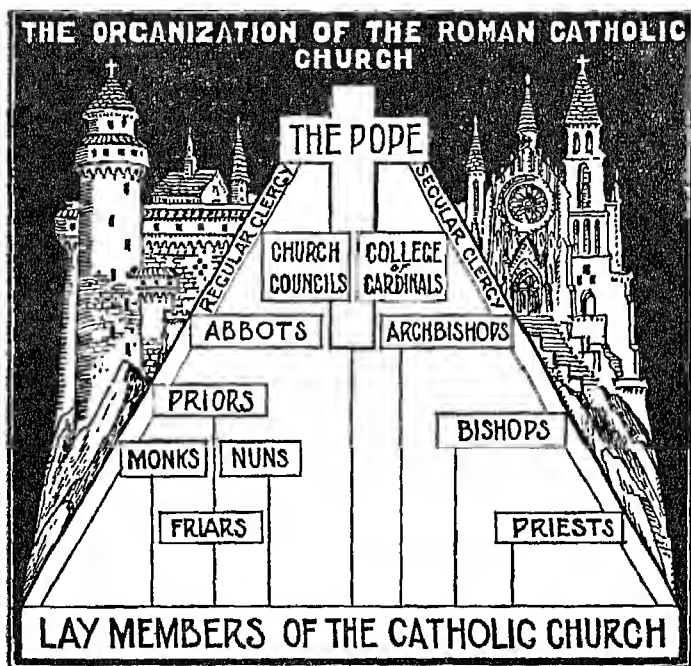


FIG. 18.

kingdom of Charles was the basis of modern France. The kingdom of Louis ultimately gave rise to modern Germany. And from Lothar's 'middle kingdom' have resulted the Burgundies, the states of Northern Italy, Switzerland,



Belgium and Holland. The territories of Charles and Louis were compact, and their subjects being united by common languages, soon learnt to regard themselves as nations. But the 'middle kingdom' remained a bone of contention and a cause of war for many years. It comprised conflicting elements, Teutonic Austrasians, Romance-speaking Burgundians and Italian Lombards who had no connection with each other either in blood or language. So in addition to the destructive Frankish tradition of divided inheritance there were geographical and racial forces at work to break up this region into subdivisions.

When Lothar died, the 'middle kingdom' was divided among his three sons, the eldest Louis II taking Italy and the title of Emperor. But the brothers could not live together in peace. They were having constant feuds and further subdivisions of Charlemagne's empire followed. We need not follow closely this period of European history—a record of conflict and confusion worse confounded for readers by the repetition of the same names, mostly 'Louis' and 'Charles', in the royal families. No one of these kings had the personality essential to the holder of a crown or the power of organization proper to a state. During the next two hundred years Europe sank once more into the 'Dark Ages' comparable to those following the break up of the Roman Empire.

(ii) *Invasions from Outside: the Northmen.*—As soon as the strong hand of Charlemagne was withdrawn there were new or rather renewed invasions upon the empire from almost all directions. In the south the Saracens, already established in Spain, raided the Christian lands along the Mediterranean and actually gained a foothold in Sicily. The wandering hordes of fierce Magyars or Hungarians attacked from the east and brought ruin and devastation in Germany. But the fiercest of invasions having important

consequences on European history came from the north. Those were the invasions of the Northmen or Norsemen, often known as the *Vikings*.

The Northmen lived in the countries which we now call Norway, Sweden and Denmark. The nature of their country with its barren soil and broken coast-line made them, like the ancient Greeks, a race of pirates and daring soldiers. By the end of the eighth century the Northmen increased so much in population that their existence in the Scandinavian peninsula became difficult. So they began to search for new lands across the North Sea, the Baltic and the Atlantic. During the ninth century they settled in Iceland\* and Greenland and even travelled down the coast of North America. At about the same time another band of Northmen, the Rus, penetrated into Russia (to which they gave their name), where their chief, Rurik, became the founder of the first royal line of that country. A third band under the name of Danes began to make attacks upon the British Isles with fire and sword, and they forced Alfred the Great to recognize them, after the Treaty of Wedmore, as masters of the north-eastern part of that country which came to be called the Danelaw.

The first attacks of the Northmen upon Frankish territory began even before the death of Charlemagne. After his death the attacks became annual and chronic. The marauders came across the sea every year, burnt churches and monasteries, and so devastated the country that the peasants did not venture to raise crops. The weak Carolingians who succeeded Charlemagne were unable to check these enemies, and often adopted the policy of buying

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\*Iceland soon became a great centre of Scandinavian civilization. There grew up a class of bards who preserved orally the sagas or legends of the Northmen. These sagas were collected under the name of the *Eddas* from which we can learn much about the religion and mythology of the early Teutonic people.

them off. This policy proved dangerous as it tempted the marauders to come more frequently than before. Then, in the beginning of the tenth century Charles the Simple, the Carolingian king of the West Franks, following the policy of the English King Alfred the Great, granted settlement to the Northmen under Rollo. Rollo with his followers made the northern part of France his permanent territory with Rouen as capital. This part of France soon became known as Normandy, the abode of the Northmen or Normans.

The danger from the Northmen began to die out from the eleventh century. Two influences were working to bring about this change. First, there was the influence of Christianity. The Northmen at first worshipped their Gods of battle, Odin, Thor and the rest; and they were particularly bitter towards the Christian church, and took great pleasure in murdering the Christian priests and nuns. Perhaps they could not forget the memory of the cruelties with which Charlemagne treated their pagan ancestors in the name of Christianity. But soon after their settlement in Gaul they were converted to Christianity and became the best of citizens. The second element which offered effective resistance to the ravages of the Northmen was the growth of the feudal nobility with their strong and well-fortified castles and armed horsemen. Of feudalism we shall speak in a later chapter.

The invasion of the Northmen wrought havoc for a time in the economic and cultural life of Western Europe. But soon the early fury subsided; and when they settled down, their sea-faring tendencies stimulated the declining European trade with the Near East. The Northmen also gave strong evidence of genius in administration, and brought with them *sagas* and tales which profoundly influenced the literature and music of the Middle Ages.

For instance, they constructed a unified state in England, formed a kingdom in Sicily and founded a republic in Ireland. Most of all, the Northmen of northern France, by adopting Christianity and the French language and customs, remained the best governed and the most cultured people of Western Europe for a long time to come.

## CHAPTER XIX

### FEUDALISM, THE MEDIEVAL WAY OF LIFE

The word 'Feudalism' is applied to a mode of socio-political organization which arose in medieval Europe through the medium of land tenure. In its origin the organization may roughly be compared to the basis of the caste system in India. It may be recalled that the invading Indo-Aryans were obliged to divide themselves into distinct groups (later, castes) with respective vocations in life, in order to be able to collect their armies quickly for attack and defence as well as to organize their conquests into a permanent settlement. Similarly, Feudalism was born and bred amid constant shocks of war and a necessity for organization.

#### RISE OF FEUDALISM

In the confusion following the collapse, first of the Roman Empire from the attacks of Germans and Huns, and later, of the Frankish Empire from the attacks of the Magyars, Saracens and Northmen, the weak and poor needed protection. Now, protection could be given only by the strong and the rich who could build stone castles, and procure war horses and iron armour. The rich also needed the services of the poor to act as their soldiers, to cultivate their lands, and to prepare the food for their table. Out of this mutual necessity a relationship grew up which supplied the fundamental ideas underlying Feudalism, namely, every man must have a 'lord' to protect him, and the holding of land became the basis of relationship between them.

THE GOVERNMENTAL PHASE OF FEUDALISM: THE LORD AND  
VASSAL RELATIONSHIP

The violence and chaos which followed for a couple of centuries after the death of Charlemagne contributed greatly to the development of feudalism. The Carolingian Empire, as we know, had been broken up into separate kingdoms by civil wars and invasions of the Northmen and other races. The rulers of these kingdoms were too weak to enforce obedience from their subjects or the carrying out of duties by their officials. The real authority passed into the hands of the descendants of the *margraves* and counts who had been merely royal officials under Charlemagne. They now became completely independent, ruling their lands without any regard for the commands of the nominal king. They built strong walls round their castles and manors, and organized a defence against the attacks of the Northmen. As a result, the common people looked to them for the protection which the king failed to provide. In the midst of this universal insecurity many free peasants were deprived of their lands by violence and reduced to the position of vassals. Others, prompted by the instinct of self-defence, gave up their lands to some powerful lord and received them back again as vassals under his protection. This system is known as *commendation*. Commendation became frequent during the invasions of the Northmen. Even the Church lands which for a long time had escaped the service due to the State, had to come under the feudal system. The Church had been getting lands from pious kings and penitent nobles; and as it was a corporation which never died, it never lost what it got. The Church lands were wholly occupied by a population of agricultural labourers. Now the problem was how to protect this vast property in an age of violence when plunderers had no respect for the

Church and churchmen. That problem was solved by the feudal system. The Bishops and Abbots parted with their lands as fiefs on the tenure of military service. They became feudal lords who could command a number of fighting tenants when necessary. On the other hand some of these churchmen themselves became feudal vassals of powerful neighbouring lords who gave them protection. Such vassals instead of giving military service to their lords often said Masses in their families. Thus all classes of society were bound together by feudal ties.

It has been customary to speak of Feudalism as a pyramidal structure at the head of which stood the King. According to the theory of those times the King was supposed to hold his land from God ; so he was the supreme overlord on earth. Those who received lands directly from the king were called tenants-in-chief. They were the dukes, counts and barons with large estates. The tenants-in-chief found it to their advantage to lease their lands to other vassals on terms similar to those they themselves received from the king. The vassals of the tenants-in-chief were called subvassals, and this principle of subletting fiefs was known as subinfeudation. The subvassals in their turn found it to their interest to subinfeudate their land to their vassals. So it often happened, notably in France, that the land nominally belonging to the king was separated from his direct control by seven or eight intermediate persons. At the lowest stage of the social structure stood the serf who actually tilled the land. The serf could not be brought or sold like a slave ; but he was bound to the soil and could not move from the fief on which he was born. He received a bit of land which he could cultivate for himself during the time when he was not working on the manorial land reserved for the use of the lord.

The above is only a theoretical picture suggested by the ideas inherent in feudal society. The picture is too precise to conform to practice. Feudalism was not created by any royal decree or by the genius of any one man. It was created by the circumstances of the times during which it flourished. We call it the 'feudal system', but this is a misnomer. There was no uniform set of regulations in Feudalism. It came into being confusedly in different shapes on account of different conditions and customs which varied from country to country. In the chaos of the times each man made such terms as he could with his lord. These terms included the right of hunting, fishing, cutting trees and ferrying men across rivers.

Feudal society was further complicated by the fact that the same person held fiefs from different sources—one from the King, another from a Duke, a third from a Count, a fourth from a Bishop. His own vassals frequently did the same. This complex organization led to endless conflicts and quarrels in which the peasants suffered undiluted and hopeless misery.

In spite of its complexity there were three principal elements in the feudal system. The first element was 'vassalage'. It meant the tie which bound the tenant to his 'liege' or lord who granted him the 'fief'. The ceremony by which the tie was established was known as 'homage'. Kneeling with uncovered head, the tenant placed his hand between those of his future lord and declared himself to be his 'man' (Latin *homo*, whence *homage*) or vassal. The vassal vowed to serve his liege-lord with his life, and the latter in return gave the vassal a kiss of peace, put him in actual possession of the land, and assured him protection. The second element was the holding of the land upon terms of service usually *military*. The vassal had to follow the lord to battle with a certain number of knights for a



specified number of days in the year. The third element of feudalism was the 'Immunity and Sovereignty'. When a feudal vassal received a grant of land, he generally received with it the 'immunitas', that is, the right to act there in all respects as a sovereign, 'saving only the duty which he owed to his lord the King, and saving also the rights which the king had in the last resort over the inhabitants of the given lands'.\* Otherwise the feudal vassal was practically independent of his lord in the matter of governing his estate. He could levy soldiers, execute justice and impose and collect fines for all sorts of offences. In the exercise of these rights he was free from any interference on the part of his lord.

#### THE ECONOMIC PHASE OF FEUDALISM, THE MANOR AND THE PEOPLE ON IT

The Romans at the height of their power had built many cities in various parts of their vast empire. But with the invasion of the Goths and other barbarians, urban life in northern Europe began to disappear. By the ninth century towns and cities became almost non-existent save in Moslem and Byzantine territories. The great bulk of the people dwelt in small village communities on the manors of nobles and rich churchmen.

The manor was an agricultural estate covering hundreds of acres and worked by scores of people. Upon the centre of the manor the lord or owner had his chateau or castle, often on a high steep hill surrounded by a wide ditch or moat. Over the moat there was a bridge which could be drawn up in times of danger. Early in the middle ages the castles were built of wood and so could be easily burned

\* Emerson—*Introduction to the Middle Ages*, p. 245.

by enemies. But in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries most castles were built of stone, and many of them survive in ruins up to the present day.

Near the castle of the lord the huts of the peasants and serfs clustered in a village. Here also dwelt the miller, the blacksmith, the carpenter and the saddler, who all worked for the lord in return for the right of living in the village. Almost every manor had a village church and a priest who read prayers in church, in Latin, each Sunday and also worked as doctor, teacher or writer to any one who needed his services.

Beyond the village there were the fields for tillage and the common pasture for grazing sheep and cattle. The fields were not divided after the modern fashion into individual holdings, but were ploughed and sowed and reaped all together. The corn would be brought to the lord's mill for grinding, and the greater part of it went to his barns. One-third of the arable land was in turn left unplanted each year so that the soil might not lose its fertility. The whole manor was enclosed by a woodland or forest where the swine fed, the woodmen felled timber and the lord of the manor hawked and hunted.

Thus the manor was a self-contained little economic world itself. It supplied everything that its people needed. It raised its own food consisting mostly of vegetables, though the lord of the manor had plenty of meat and wine and fish. It made its own clothing out of flax and wool, for which the womenfolk had to spend half the daylight hours in spinning and weaving. Sometimes animal skin tanned into leather was also used for clothing. Since there was very little money, trade within the manor was almost entirely by barter. But spices and salt necessary for preserving meat throughout the long winters were obtained from the outside world. All law suits arising between the

villagers were brought before the manorial court and decided there. Similarly their spiritual needs were satisfied by the manor priest, the representative of the Holy Father at Rome, who held the keys of heaven and hell. The priest spoke

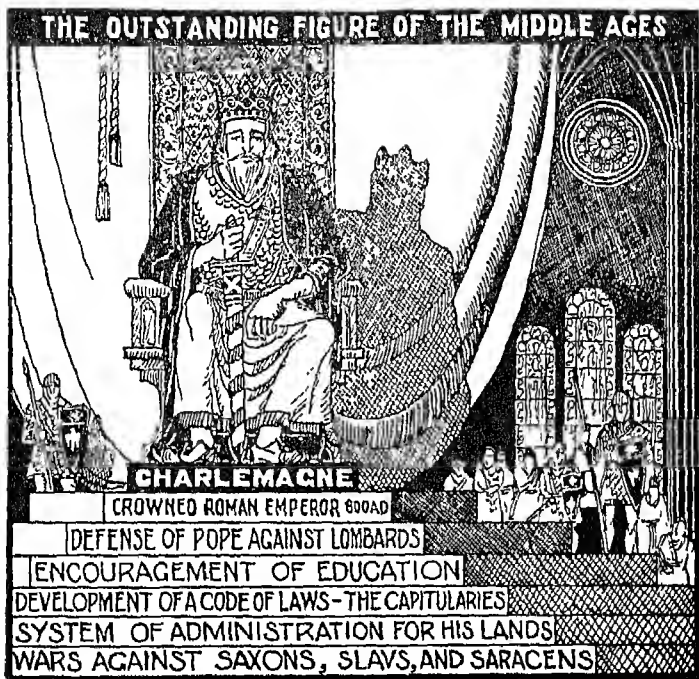


FIG. 19.

in Latin which his congregation could not understand. In fact all they knew was that if they did not go to church on Sundays and Saints' days, after death they would be put in hell.

## DEFECTS OF FEUDALISM

Under the conditions of a barbarous age, an institution like Feudalism served many useful purposes. It brought the people together for mutual help and protection, supplied a rough-and-ready method of administration and saved society from complete dissolution. But it also had serious drawbacks which in the course of time outweighed its merits. Feudalism presented the most disastrous features of a rigid caste-system by creating barriers between man and man and class and class. It thus prevented the growth of a united national life for many centuries to come. Society was dominated by a hereditary class of landowners—the tenants-in-chief—who held land directly from the King. The more powerful among them had strong castles and numerous retainers; and it was not at all unusual or difficult for them to throw off their allegiance to the King and become independent tyrants. On the other hand, the authority of the King was limited at every turn. He could command an army or collect money from his tenants-in-chief only. His hold upon the common people was slight as they were only to do homage to their immediate lords. The King had no power of local administration which was left to the vassals themselves. In the king's court only the tenants-in-chief could be judged; but the sub-vassal to whom the tenants-in-chief sub-infeudated their fiefs had to attend the manorial court (and not the king's court) for the settlement of their disputes. In the latter part of the Middle Ages it became clear that feudalism was nothing more but a step removed from anarchy..

## CHIVALRY AND KNIGHTHOOD

Closely connected with Feudalism there grew up an institution known as Chivalry. Like Feudalism it had no

founder, but appeared spontaneously, as representing some of the ideals and aspirations of the feudal period. Chivalry has sometimes been called the 'Flower of Feudalism'.

The term Chivalry is derived from the French word *cheval*, meaning 'horse', and it refers to those customs and manners which a true knight, feudal or otherwise\*, should observe. He must, in the first place, be a Christian ready to defend the Church on all occasions and protect the helpless and the weak wherever he might find them; he must also be brave, truthful, courteous and respectful to a lady. Thus, even in those times of boorishness and barbarous warfare chivalry set up a standard which, though often disregarded, helped to soften man's manners and customs. The glory of chivalry and the story of ideal Knights was sung in the courts of feudal provinces by French minstrels called *troubadours* who travelled throughout the length and breadth of Western Europe.

During the age of chivalry the Knights, when they had not to fight, often amused themselves by mock fighting. Such mock fighting would usually take place in the house of some feudal Baron who made wide proclamation of the event. All Knights from far and near would grace the occasion to show their skill and valour. When the combat was between two Knights, it was called a *Joust*, and when two companies of Knights were engaged it was known as a *tournament*. The combatants were usually armed with pointless swords and blunt spears, and victory went to the party who could unhorse the antagonist. The reward of the victor was usually a wreath of flowers and the praises of his lady-love.

\* Anybody could enter the order of Knighthood if he was qualified by birth and property. The Knighthood was conferred by a ceremony in which the Church also took part.

## DECAY OF FEUDALISM

When Feudalism outgrew its usefulness, the seeds of its destruction began to germinate. These were found present in feudal society itself. The King who had little or no power and the common people oppressed by the nobles were alike interested in the destruction of the feudal order. The Kings took advantage of this new condition and were helped by the movement of events.

As a result of the Crusades many feudal warriors were killed; others who returned from the Holy Land were greatly impoverished by debt for which they had to sell some of their estates. The Kings, particularly the Kings of England and France, took advantage of this position and brought many nobles more and more under their control. At the same time many towns bought charters of self-government from the needy Barons and became free from feudal tyranny.

Another great blow which struck at the root of feudalism was the increasing use of money as a means of dispensing with personal services. The Barons paid money to the King instead of bringing their sub-vassals for the royal army, and the sub-vassals also found it to their advantage to do the same in respect of their 'lords' especially in times of sowing and reaping. The result was that the Barons and their vassals became less and less warlike and more and more interested in the cultivation of their estates; while with the money thus provided the King could now hire mercenaries who would serve him at all times to quell rebellions.

During the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries Feudalism was further weakened by a great social upheaval resulting from a terrible plague called the Black Death. It devastated Europe from the Mediterranean to the Baltic carrying away about half of its population. There was a shortage of

labour. Naturally the economic condition of the labourers improved and many serfs purchased freedom from their lords, who found it to their advantage to take up sheep-farming which was more profitable than agriculture, as wool had been in great demand for the growing cloth industry.

There were other forces at work which hastened the decay of Feudalism still further. The changed method of warfare resulting from the invention of gunpowder made the Baron's castle and Knight's armour almost useless. Lastly, the great change over the minds of the European peoples from the teachings and doctrines of reform movements such as Lollardism, the gradual rise of the middle class, the increase in the number and importance of towns, and the introduction of the printing press with the consequent speed of education created a distaste for military service and brought Feudalism almost to a close. But its decay was not uniform throughout Europe. In England the Wars of the Roses (1455-1485) between the Houses of York and Lancaster practically blotted out the feudal order and created the absolute power of the Tudors, and as its corollary the spirit of nationalism. After the Hundred Years' War (1337-1453 A.D.) Feudalism ceased to be a political power both in England and France. In some countries in Europe Feudalism continued up to the nineteenth century and some of its characteristics may be traced even in the social organization of present-day Europe.

## CHAPTER XX

### THE RISE OF THE MUSLIM EMPIRE

We have seen that almost the whole of Western Europe sank into a condition of ruin and disorder (with temporary revival during the reign of Charlemagne) in the period of the thousand years following the decline of the Roman Empire. The eastern half of the Empire had still wealth and art as well as a large army ; and it acquired new strength, under the able Emperor Justinian. But shortly after his death, there also, all social virtues and inspirations were extinct and the sovereigns were hardly less debased than their people. In view of this miserable state of affairs the period of European history, say, from 500 to 1100 A.D. may be truly called the Dark Age.

However, we see a different picture when we review the history of the expanse of the earth from the Mediterranean to the Pacific, in the same period. Like Europe, Asia also had suffered from the pressure of the barbarian invaders. But China under the Tang dynasty, India under the Guptas and Arabia-Persia after Muhammad rose and expanded splendidly. In this chapter we shall consider the brilliant civilization which Arabia built up in the seventh century and which remains one of the most powerful religious and cultural forces of the present-day world.

#### ARABIA BEFORE THE PROPHET

Arabia in pre-historic times, was perhaps the cradle of those peoples who subsequently became the Babylonians,



the Assyrians, the Phoenicians and the Hebrews of history. In the fourth century B.C. Alexander's army had passed by Arabia on the north, and about three hundred years later the Romans had penetrated some way along one of its trade routes. But down to the end of the sixth century of the Christian era Arabia remained on the whole a land of mystery. It is probable that before 1000 B.C. there was a civilization in southern Arabia forming a connecting link with the trade markets of India and North Africa. But that civilization was soon forgotten.

The south-west of Arabia, the coastal region along the Red Sea, had some agriculture and some towns grew up in the provinces of al-Hejaz and Yemen. Beyond these regions lay vast deserts spotted with oases here and there. Thus the people of ancient Arabia fell into two main classes: the settled folk or 'dwellers of cities', and the wandering and restless Bedouins or 'dwellers of the desert'. All of them, the Bedouins particularly, were engaged in constant quarrels among themselves and occasional plundering raids into the neighbouring territories of Syria and Mesopotamia. The biggest of the Arabian towns were Mecca, Medina and Jeddah; and in them Greek and Jewish influence was probably quite marked. The religions of the Arabians were Sabaeism or Star worship and a low form of polytheism and idolatry. At Mecca they also worshipped a black stone called the Kaaba which was supposed to have fallen from Heaven. Polygamy was practised on a large scale, and every kind of vice and superstition was widely prevalent in social customs. Politically the Arabs were disunited. There was no central government, each tribe governing itself under the leadership of its own Sheik or chief. But the Sheik could not become an autocrat. The Arabs were born democrats, meeting their Sheiks on equal

terms. Such was the condition of Arabia before the Great Prophet Muhammad preached his new religion.\*

#### MUHAMMAD AND THE ORIGIN OF ISLAM

Muhammad was born at Mecca, in 571 A.D., of a family of the Qurayash tribe. He lost his parents at an early age and was brought up by his grandfather Abdul Muttalib and his uncle Abu Talib. The early life of Muhammad was not very happy. He had to earn his living by accompanying trading caravans into Southern Arabia and Syria. When he was twenty-five years of age he came to manage the business of a rich widow, called Khadija, whom he afterwards married.

From his early life Muhammad was given to religious meditations. On his travels he met with the Jews and Christians whose religious ideas influenced him. He would retire to Mount Hira, near Mecca, to pray and fast, go into trances, and see visions from God. By degrees Muhammad was convinced of the necessity for a purer religion and he became an inspired prophet among his own people. At the age of forty he began to feel the message of God which he ought to preach to the Arab race and to the world.

The new religion which Muhammad preached is called *Islam*, meaning 'submission to Allah'; and his utterances were set down in the sacred book known as the Koran (Arabic *Quran*—'recitation'). The essential principles of Islam may be summarized thus: worship of the God, Allah, and recognition of Muhammad as His prophet, belief in the revealed books of which the Quran is the last and only one

\* The word 'Saracen' is sometimes applied to the people of Arabia. But it can be applied to others besides Arabians and Arabs. So in this book the term has been avoided. Also see Hitti's *History of the Arabs*, p 43.

necessary, and belief in a future life. The fundamental duties (ibadat) of the followers of Islam or the Moslems are: the profession of faith summed up in the formula *la ilah illa Allah, Muhammad rasul Allah* (there is no God but Allah, and Muhammad is His Prophet), the five daily prayers, the fast in the month of Ramadan, the pilgrimage to Mecca, and alms-giving. These teachings which came from the mouth of one of the most remarkable men who ever came into the world, cemented the semi-barbarous Arabs into a civilized nation, and are satisfying the soul's cravings of about 300,000,000 people at the present time.

About 610 or 612 A.D. came the night of the secret resolution, the *Laylat al-Qadr* (Leila al Kuds). Muhammad determined to proclaim himself the messenger of Allah, the one God, the lord of heaven and earth. The new religion he introduced was fundamentally a religion of charity and of love as against an old faith of hatred and cruelty. It was the religion of Islam—the joy of submitting to the will and the wisdom of Allah. But like a true statesman the Prophet aimed at reform rather than at revolution. He attempted to conciliate the new faith with the old and tolerated polygamy and slavery which were too deep-rooted to be assailed with success.

To the fanatical idolators of Arabia the new religion of the Prophet appeared as a subversive doctrine and it made very little headway in the beginning. Only his wife Khadijah and his two kinsmen Abu Bkr and Ali believed in him. Soon a fourth convert named Omar joined him. The people of the Qurayashite tribe at first took the Prophet for a harmless lunatic. But they ultimately began to plot against his life for denying the power of their idols and the usefulness of sacrifices of human flesh. Muhammad had to flee to Medina. This flight is called the *Hejira*. It took place in 622 A.D. The followers of Muhammad mark their

year from that date as the Christians do from the birth of Christ.

The people of Medina were ready to listen to the Prophet. Soon a large number of followers gathered round him; and with their help he became the teacher as well as the ruler of Medina. Then, after a period of petty warfare he returned to Mecca, and all the Arabian tribes gradually accepted him as their Prophet. Muhammad died in 632 A.D. in the eleventh year of the Hejira and the sixty-third year of his age—the prophet, poet, priest, and king of Arabia.

#### THE FIRST FOUR CALIPHS

Muhammad left Arabia practically united; but he had left no male heir of his body, nor had he definitely nominated any successor. The decision as to succession practically lay with the chiefs who were present at Medina when he died. They, ignoring the theory of heredity, chose the powerful Abu Bekr who thus became the first Caliph (or Khalifah), that is, representative of the Prophet. Abu Bekr took energetic steps to spread the new religion, and wrested a large part of Syria from the Byzantine empire. The second Caliph Omar (634-644 A.D.), with the help of his brilliant general Khalid, defeated the Roman Emperor Heraclius at the battle of Tiberias, and took from him Damascus, together with Syria, Palestine, and Phoenicia. The armies of Omar also proceeded against Egypt where they took Alexandria and founded a new city, Fostat, which later became Cairo.

Omar was murdered in Medina by a Persian slave. He was followed by Othman who held the Caliphate for twelve years. During this period the real power came into the hands of his cousin Muawiyah of the tribe of the Omayyads

and the governor of Syria. Internal disorder began which ultimately led to the assassination of Othman in Medina.

After Othman's death Ali, who had married the Prophet's daughter Fatima, was chosen as the Caliph. Ali was one of the purest and brightest spirits of the whole of Moslem hierarchy. But he was bitterly opposed by Ayesha, the Prophet's widow, who disliked Fatima. Another enemy of Ali was Muawiyah who had raised the standard of revolt in Damascus to avenge the death of his relation Othman. Ali had to fight incessantly against Muawiyah. It is said that ninety battles were fought in a hundred and ten days, Ali losing 25,000 of his men and Muawiyah 45,000. At last Ali was stabbed to death leaving his sons, Hasan and Hussain, to continue the succession of his family. But before Hasan could organize the administration, he had to take the field against Muawiyah who also proclaimed himself as Caliph in Syria. At the same time some of the followers of Hussain proved faithless. So Hussain had to make a treaty with Muawiyah, by which Muawiyah became the Caliph and it was agreed that after Muawiyah's death the Caliphate should devolve on Hussain, the younger son of Ali. Shortly after this treaty Hasan was poisoned by Yezid, son of Muawiyah.

#### THE OMAYYAD CALIPHATE (661-750 A.D.)

From Muawiyah begins the Caliphate of the Omayyads. Damascus now became the capital of the Moslem Empire. Though the early years of Muawiyah were full of internal strife, the foreign conquests continued. He attacked the Byzantines, destroyed Carthage and completed the conquest of almost the whole of North Africa.

After Muawiyah's death his son Yezid ascended the throne, in defiance of the agreement which Muawiyah had

made with Hussain. Hussain refused to accept Yezid as the Caliph and he left Medina to meet his supporters at Kufah. On the way Hussain was killed with his two hundred followers in the field of Karbala.

By this time and as a result of the civil wars the Moslems were divided into two sects—the Shiahs and the Sunnis. The Shiahs maintained that the true successor of Muhammad was Ali and that Abu Bekr and his two successors were usurpers. On the other hand the Sunnis recognized the title of Abu Bekr, Omar and Muawiyah as legitimate Caliphs, and they followed the *Sunna* (custom, form, usage) or the view and usage of the Prophet contending that 'where the Quran does not fully and clearly provide direction, the inquirer should seek trustworthy information as to what Muhammad had said on the subject, what his action had been with relation to the subject or what he had approved in others'.\* At present the Sunnites are found strong in Arabia, North Africa, Egypt, Central Asia, India, China and the East Indies. The Shiahs are mostly in Persia and some places in India. The 'martyrdom' of Hussain is observed by the Shiates during the first ten days of Muharram, the first month of the Moslem year.

The cruelty and depraved nature of Yezid, the butchery of Karbala and the jealousies of the different parties who became adherents of rival Caliphs led to dangerous feuds after his death. These feuds were largely responsible for the downfall of the Arab Kingdom of the Omayyads, but there were at least two Caliphs who deserve mention. They were Abdul Malik and his son Walid I.

After killing all his enemies Abdul Malik became the undisputed master of the Islamic world, organized Arab administration of the empire and opened a mint for coinage.

\* *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, Vol. XII.

Until his reign all State records were kept either in Persian or in Greek, but Abdul Malik made it a rule that such records must be kept in Arabic.

Abdul Malik was succeeded by his son Walid I, perhaps the mightiest of the Omayyads. During his reign the boundaries of the Moslem Empire were extended from Spain in the west to the frontiers of China in the east. In 711 A.D. an army of 12,000 men was placed under the command of General Tarik. Tarik first landed at the famous rock which has ever since borne the name of its conqueror (Gibraltar, Jabal-al-Tarik, the mountain of Tarik). The victory of Tarik attracted crowds of invaders across the Straits. Musa, the Arab governor of Africa, became anxious and at the same time jealous of the success of Tarik, and himself crossed to Spain. He took the towns of Sidona, Carmora and Seville, and was on his way to Toledo, the capital of the Visigothic kingdom, when Tarik came to meet him. After the surrender of Toledo, Musa continued his march and completely subjugated the north of Spain from Saragossa to Navarre. Thus within six months of Tarik's landing almost the whole kingdom of Spain was made a province of the Caliphate under the name of *al-Andalus*. The new settlers of Spain—the Arabs, Syrians, Berbers, and Copts—were indifferently called Moors by the Western people. The Moors in Spain eventually became just as Spanish as the Christians. They were Spaniards, and what they did and thought belonged equally to Spain and to all Spanish speaking countries all over the world.

While Tarik was conquering Spain the Moslem fleet was annexing the island of Sardinia and other naval bases for the overlordship of the Mediterranean. About the same year an Arab army reached the mouth of the Indus and began the conquest of Sind; but further advance in India was checked till the tenth century by a coalition of the

Rajputs. In the Far East, China was tolerant of Islam as it was of Christianity and both religions found converts among the Chinese.

After the death of Walid I, the Omayyads of Damascus ruled the Moslem Empire for only about thirty-five years. Their despotic rule often roused the opposition of the righteous Moslems and gave birth to civil dissensions. Some of the successors of Walid I were the sons of freed women, and the majority of them were concerned more with the chase and the music than with the Quran and state affairs. Taking advantage of this situation there were revolutions not only in Arabia but also in Persia, Mesopotamia and Khorasan. At last zero hour came when the Abbasids defeated and afterwards killed the last Omayyad Caliphate Marwan in the battle of the Zab. Then followed a slaughter of the Omayyad princes, all of whom perished except Abdur Rahman who took refuge in Spain where he founded the Omayyad Kingdom of Cordova (755 A.D.).

### THE ABBASIDS

The Abbasids represented the party of equality among the peoples who joined the Faith as against the Omayyads who represented the aristocracy of Islam and Arab supremacy. In order to stabilize this position the Abbasids claimed descent from Abbas, the uncle of the Prophet. This claim was supported by the non-Arabian Moslems in general and by the Shiah of Persia in particular.

The Abbasids reigned for about five centuries with their capital, first, at Damascus and, then, at Baghdad as a more central city of their Empire. During this period Persian officers were appointed in all important posts of the Government and 'the old Arab Muslims and the new foreign



converts were beginning to coalesce and shade into each other'.\*

The first Abbasid Caliph was Abul Abbas, but the real founder of the dynasty was al-Mansur who crushed all revolts and repulsed a Byzantine invasion with great slaughter. Ten years after the death of al-Mansur came Haroun-al-Raschid the most distinguished ruler of the Abbasid dynasty.

Haroun was a brave soldier who often took the field himself to suppress lawlessness in every part of his dominion. Haroun had many wars with the Byzantines. The wicked Queen Irene who had seized the throne of Constantinople after blinding her young son, Constantine VI, and her Chancellor Nicephorus, repeatedly broke the treaty made with Haroun and quarrelled with him and was defeated and forgiven by the magnanimous Caliph. But at last Haroun could endure it no longer. He proclaimed a *jihad*—a holy war, against the Greeks, took the whole of Asia Minor, and exacted tribute from Constantinople. Haroun was unostentatious, pious and charitable, and took a great interest in the welfare of his subjects.

The qualities of Haroun-al-Raschid were inherited by his son Mamun who in person repulsed more than one Byzantine invasion, and during whose reign the Arabs conquered Sicily and Crete. Mamun's reign reached the peak of Moslem glory.

### THE SPLENDOUR OF ISLAM

There is nothing more remarkable in history than the rapidity with which the people of Islam built up their vast empire and developed their civilization. Within a century after the death of Muhammad, the *muezzin* could call the

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\* Hitti, p. 287.

faithful to prayer from the frontiers of China and India, across North Africa, to Europe as far as the Pyrenees. This empire was larger than that of the Romans; and what the Romans took centuries to accomplish the Moslems did in as many decades.

It has been usual with some writers to attribute the spread of Islam to the sword rather than to its intrinsic merits. This can hardly be justified. Islam showed, at least during the early part of its expansion, a singular spirit of toleration which was as complete as in the Rome of Hadrian or in the China of Tai-Tsung. When Musa's men occupied Cordova they did not attack the great Visigothic church of St. Vincents or plunder it or pull it down. They bought half of it, and the Christians were allowed to keep the other half for church services for many years. Afterwards Abd-al-Rahman bought the whole cathedral and turned it into a great Mosque which is still one of the most beautiful things in the Spanish world. Though military expansion was everywhere accompanied by the growth of Islam, the alternatives offered to the conquered people were not conversion or death. Those who remained non-Moslems or *Zimmies* as they were called had only to pay a small tribute called *Jiziya*. A large part of the popularity of the new religion was due to the simplicity of its tenets, free from priesthood and elaborate ritual, and it appealed to the Christians who were being confused by theological controversies among themselves. People were perhaps further inclined to Islam by the enthusiasm of its followers, and the fair and equitable social and economic order which it offered to the mass of mankind against 'the capitalist and slave-holding system of the Roman Empire'.

The Moslems were interested not simply in conquering the world but in creating a new culture and spreading it far and wide. This culture was a synthesis of Arabic,

Greek, Roman, Jewish, Persian and Indian elements, and it remained the most outstanding gift of the East to the West during the Middle Ages. Baghdad in the East and Cordova in the West were the great centres which dominated the intellectual life of a large part of the world for about four centuries. They became the meeting places of a large number of scholars of every branch of learning, whatever their race or religion. Even discussions on heresies were freely tolerated. Some of the intellectual activity of the times found expression in the Mutazila (seceders) Movement which later spread over Spain and influenced Christian scholasticism. Sir W. Muir says in his *Caliphate*, 'It was owing to the labours of those learned men that the nations of Europe stranded in the darkness of the Middle Ages became acquainted with their own proper but forgotten patrimony of Grecian science and philosophy'. Thus the Moslems started the regeneration of Europe and, in a way, inaugurated the era of the Renaissance.

The Arabs were masters of important practical arts. They studied medicine very carefully, making use of the books of Greek doctors, and became famous for their medical and surgical skill. They introduced numerals and the study of Algebra; established famous universities and schools in all their chief towns; restored Roman roads and aqueducts; and built magnificent structures such as the Alcazar at Seville, the Alhambra Palace at Granada, the Grand Mosque of Baghdad and the Jumma Mosque of Ispahan. Moslem traders in India became acquainted with Hindu mathematical studies which they adopted and carried to the western world. The skill of the Arabs in dyeing, metal-working and pottery has never been surpassed. Their commerce attained vast proportions and brought immense wealth—the spices of the East Indies, the pearls of Ceylon, the diamonds of Golconda and the masks of Tibet. The

merchant fleets of Arabia, guided by a mariner's compass of their own making, linked together China, Russia, Egypt and Spain. One of their books was the famous—*The Arabian Nights' Entertainments*, or the *Thousand and One Nights*, the stories of which draw a splendid picture of the wealth and magnificence of the great Caliphs, particularly of the great Haroun-al-Raschid. The Arabian explorer Ibn Baruta (1379 A.D.) was said to have travelled more countries than Marco Polo.

#### THE FALL OF THE ABBASIDS

The Abbasid Caliphate began to break up soon after the death of Mamun. The difficulty of preserving the integrity of a vast empire had been evident even during the reign of the great Haroun. Now many independent Moslem states arose. The Fatimids, under the leadership of the descendants of Muhammad's daughter Fatima, came to power in the ninth century and broke away from the Caliphate of Baghdad. In the tenth century they siezed Egypt and Syria and made their capital at Cairo. It was at this time that the Turks made their appearance and one of the later Abbasid Caliphs took the fatal step of creating an army composed of Turkish mercenaries. Like the German armies during the later Roman Empire these Turkish guards became in time the true masters of the Abbasid Empire.

It seems that in the sixth century A.D. the predecessors of the Turks had founded a vast empire stretching from the northern frontier of China to the Black Sea. Later this empire was broken into two parts, called by the Chinese the empire of the Northern Turks and that of the Western Turks. In the seventh century A.D. both the empires acknowledged the nominal suzerainty of the famous T'ang dynasty of China. But before the close of this century the

Northern Turks regained their independence and even succeeded in bringing some of the tribes of the Western Turks under their rule. The most distinguished of the Western Turkish tribes were the Turgesh who called themselves 'Khans' and ruled independently until they were subjugated by the Caliph's army.

The Turks had already adopted Islam at first more by commercial interest and their liking for entering the Caliphate armies than by religious enthusiasm or coercion. Once they accepted the new Faith they became its greatest champions, sometimes in a most fanatical manner.

It is profitless to speak of the many Turkish tribes who established their own kingdoms on the ruins of Abbasid Caliphate. Their stories are short, bloody and monotonous. But there were at least two Turkish dynasties which stood out beyond all the rest as of special importance for our purpose. These were the Ghaznavids and the Seljuks.

### THE GHAZNAVIDS

The founder of the Ghaznavid dynasty was Subaktagin, a Turkish slave of Khorasan, and, sometime an officer of the Caliph. His capital was at Ghazni in Afghanistan. After making himself independent in fact, if not in name, he defeated the Rajputs and received Khorasan from the Samanids. His son and successor Mahmud was the mightiest king of this dynasty and one of the greatest figures in the history of Central Asia. He became master of Khorasan and half of Persia, and led his armies several times to the Punjab and down the Indus to Gujarat where he plundered the great Hindu temple of Somnath. But Mahmud was not only a conqueror; he was also a great patron of learning. Many poets and men of learning such as Alberuni and Firdousi gathered round his court. He also

established a measure of peace throughout his kingdom holding off the invasions of many Turkish tribes as Rollo in France and the Danes of the Danelaw held off their Viking kinsmen. Mahmud could not, however, properly organize his territory. Soon after his death the Seljuk Turks broke in and overthrew the Ghaznavids.

### THE SELJUK TURKS

The Seljuks seem originally to have been the royal family of the Ghuzz Turks who dwelt near the river Jaxartes in Transoxiana. Although converted to Islam, the Seljuks never ceased to raid the lands of their Muhammedan neighbours. Under their leaders Tughrul Beg and Chakir they invaded Khorasan, defeated the Ghaznavid armies and advanced upon Baghdad.

The jurisdiction of the Caliph of Baghdad had by this time shrunk almost to the city boundaries, and he was a puppet in the hands of his 'Buyid' lieutenant, a sort of Mayor of the palace. The Buyids were adherents of the Shiah doctrine. Tughrul, like most converts, was decidedly orthodox. He gave out that he meant to deliver the Caliph from the influence of the heretical 'Buyids'. He was, therefore, sent an invitation to come to Baghdad and it was readily accepted. The menace of the Buyids passed away, but Tughrul became the Great Sultan with the title of *King of the East and West*. The Caliph now became only the spiritual head of orthodox Islam.

When Tughrul Beg died he left to his nephew Alp Arslan, son of Chakir, a vast dominion extending from the Euphrates far eastward into Asia. The brilliant Alp Arslan conquered Armenia, defeated the Byzantine emperor Romanus III in the great battle of Manzikert (1071) and virtually became master of the whole of Asia Minor.

Shortly after this victory Alp Arslan died leaving his son Malik Shah as his successor. Malik had a vizier named Nizam al-Mulk, who was one of the ablest administrators of the medieval world. With his advice and guidance many colleges (known as Nizamiya) were founded in Baghdad and other important cities and the task of reforming the calendar was undertaken by the poet Omar Khayyam. It was during this reign that the Seljuks captured Jerusalem. The result (as we shall see) was the First Crusade.

Malik Shah died in 1092. Even before his death the Seljuk Empire was showing signs of dissolution. Civil wars followed as a result of which a large number of separate Seljuk dynasties were established in Asia Minor, Syria, Damascus, Aleppo, Mosul and other places, each of these dynasties setting up the pretentious title of 'sultan' or 'emir'. The Egyptian Fatimids also, taking advantage of this opportunity, recovered possession of Jerusalem (1098) shortly before the arrival of the Crusaders at the gates of the sacred city.

It would be a hard task to follow the confused history of the Seljuks from the twelfth century to the end of the thirteenth century. Throughout this period the nomads from Central Asia were pouring into their dominions. In 1243 the Seljuks were defeated by the Mongols under Jenghis at Kosedag. Some fifteen years later the Mongols under Hulagu conquered Baghdad and killed its last Caliph al-Musta'sim and completely ousted the Seljuks.

It was about this time that Moslem civilization in Spain received a deadly blow from the Christians who captured first Cordova and then Seville. The Moslems managed to hold the kingdom of Granada and the adjacent coasts by playing off one Christian kingdom against the other until they were finally ousted from Spain towards the end of the fifteenth century.

## CHAPTER XXI

### THE MEDIEVAL RELIGIOUS EMPIRE IN EUROPE

In a previous chapter we have seen how the Bishop of Rome, as a successor of St. Peter, became the spiritual head of the Western Catholic Church, and when the Western Empire was shattered to pieces by the invasions of the barbarians, the Church was able to retain its organization and to win great influence by missionary efforts, in almost all countries. During the next three centuries, the Pope slowly but surely increased his power not only as the absolute head of the Church but also as an all-powerful civil ruler, having under him a host of officials, his own system of administration and law, and vast financial resources.

#### LANDS OF THE PAPACY

By alliance with the Frankish kings such as Pippin and Charlemagne, the Pope acquired very extensive lands not only in Italy but in Gaul, Sicily and Africa. Besides these territories belonging directly to the Papacy, every abbey or every diocese controlled extensive lands. These lands had been acquired by gift from devout laymen during their lives or on their death beds. Once these lands were obtained by the Church they were seldom lost.

#### CHURCH REVENUE

Gifts were continually being made by pious people to the Church. The Church had also a vast revenue received from various other sources. In every feudal estate that belonged to the Church, there was the entire income of the



lands which were directly owned by the Church and cultivated by hired labourers or serfs living on the estate. Then there were the *tithes annats*. The tithes consisted of about one-tenth of all grain, wine, fruit, vegetables and animals raised by the farmer. The Church would also levy taxes from her tenants whenever there would be any necessity, but she was not willing to pay any taxes to a duke or king.

### CHURCH ADMINISTRATION AND LAW

The Pope, of course, did not rule his empire with armies. The Church had her own laws and her own courts. In those days there was no national legislature which could make laws applicable to the whole nation. The feudal kings were also unable to make uniform laws for the realm. As a result every feudal lord had laws of his own which were administered in his particular manorial Court. The Church laws, however, were the same all over Western Europe and as such they were respected by every body and treated with fear and awe. For instance, even the turbulent barons did not dare to break the Peace of God and Truce of God which were parts of Church law forbidding fighting and other violent acts on particular days of the year. Marriage, breaking of agreements and murder were also dealt with in the Church Courts.

It will be useful to mention here two very drastic and effective means by which the Pope could punish a powerful ruler and even a nation for breaking Church laws. These were *excommunication* and the *interdict*. When a person was excommunicated he was cast out of the Church and deprived of his office and land. He could have no hope of saving his soul unless he could make peace with the Church. Even the members of his household or his own relations had to cut off all connection with him lest they

should also lose their souls. The *interdict* was applied against a whole community or country whose people or ruler disobeyed the mandates of the Church. As soon as it was pronounced all Church doors were closed on them so that those people could not enter the churches for the purpose of worshipping God. The bodies of their dead lay unburied as no funeral rites were done on their behalf by the clergy. Baptism and marriage also were denied to those desiring them.

In order to find out and punish the heretics the Church established special forms of Courts which were afterwards known as the *Holy Inquisition*. These courts were so successful that they were introduced into Spain and other countries in later times.

### THE MEDIEVAL MONASTERY

We have mentioned the origin of monasteries in connection with the growth of Christianity, and also the Rule of St. Benedict who regulated the monastic life. In the course of time, the monks lost the sense of discipline enjoined upon them by St. Benedict. However, new orders of monks sprang up who lay fresh emphasis on the dignity of labour and austerity of life. One of such orders was founded by St. Francis of Assisi (1182-1226 A.D.) who became renowned among his contemporaries for his simplicity and purity. Another such order was the work of St. Dominic who devoted his life to the task of educating and training missionaries for dealing with the heretics.

The Franciscan and Dominican monks were called friars. The friars were different from the earlier monks in one way. The monks usually lived in monasteries, but the friars went out begging, into the world. The followers of St. Francis confined their work mostly to help the poor of

the cities. The Dominicans, on the other hand, were chiefly engaged in the field of preaching, and when persuasion failed they did not hesitate to use the most brutal means in order to suppress heretical opinions.

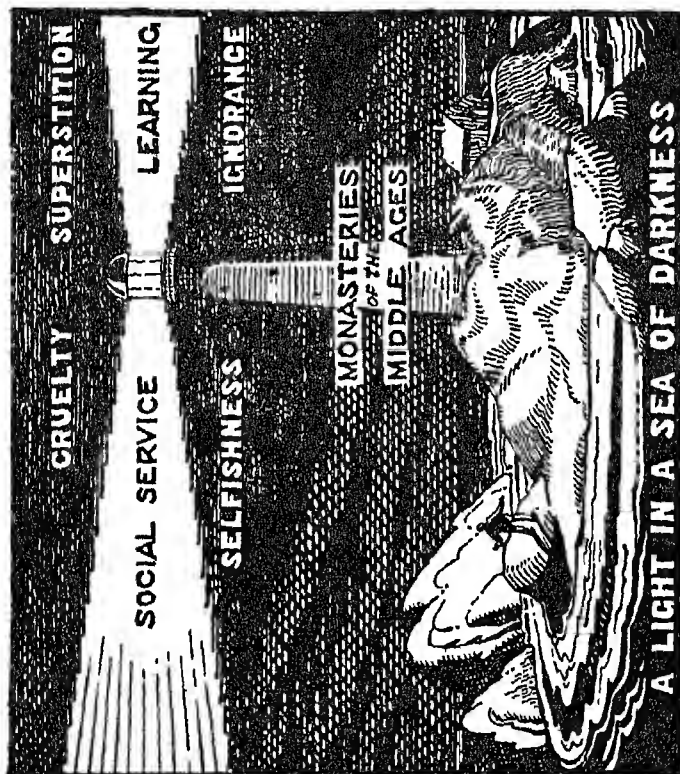


FIG. 20.

In those days the monks and friars played an important part in the educational, social and economic life of the people. The monasteries were centres of prayer and worship

as well as of learning and education. Every monastery was expected to have a school to give the necessary instruction in religion and theology to the clergy. It had also its workmen, ploughmen, gardeners, carpenters and other craftsmen. The monasteries were 'oases of refinement and love in a howling wilderness of ignorance and brutality. In them the wanderer might find rest, the sick might be nursed, the ignorant taught, the hungry fed, and the naked clothed'. In some of the monasteries the monks spent their time writing historical and theological works, or copying the Greek and Latin classics in beautiful handwriting. Some of these copies were painted with pictures called illuminations.

The monks and friars were called *regular* clergy whereas the parish priests were *secular*. The Pope was the absolute head both of the monastic orders and the secular organization of clergymen.

## CHAPTER XXII

### CHINA AND THE MONGOL CONQUESTS

After the decline of the Han dynasty the Chinese empire fell into disorder which continued throughout the fifth and sixth centuries. Then order and union were once more achieved first under the Sui dynasty (589-618 A.D.) and then under the T'angs (618-907 A.D.). With the coming of the T'ang emperors China had a renaissance in respect of militarism, religion, literature and culture.

#### THE T'ANG DYNASTY (618-907 A.D.)

The first emperor of this dynasty was Li Yuan. But the real founder was his son Li Shih-min. After the death of his father, Li Shih-min became emperor with the name of T'ang T'ai-T'sung (the founder of the T'ang). In his boyhood T'ai-T'sung had received a sound Chinese classical education and he became good at calligraphy. Specimens of his handwriting are still sold as models for students. T'ai-T'sung became equally good in riding and archery and had few equals at that time. As an emperor T'ai-T'sung showed all the influences of his early training.

In the first few years of his reign Emperor T'ai-T'sung had to carry on incessant war. He was no chocolate soldier. He fought at times at the head of his soldiers until his clothes were sodden with blood. At last he drove all his invaders beyond the Wall and was free to devote his attention to those important reforms which have made him one of the most humane and constructive monarchs in history, and he inaugurated for China a long period of peace and splendour.

Under T'ai-T'sung China became the largest and most powerful state on earth. Chinese arms were carried into Korea as far as Persia and the Caspian Sea in the west, across the Pamirs into Tibet and north-west India and Burma. It was at this time that the savage and barbarous peoples of Eastern Asia—the Kalmucks, and the Manchus of Central Asia, and the Tibetans, the Anamese, and the Koreans—came under the influence of Chinese civilization.

T'ai-T'sung would never unsheath his sword if he could avoid it. Time and again he pardoned his enemies and even took them into his service. Some of his closest friends and trusted ministers were selected in that way. With the same liberality he protected all races and religions in his Empire. The Emperor appreciated fully the value of free circulation of ideas which is the indispensable element of any true civilization. Foreigners were welcomed, and not only Buddhism, but Islam, Zoroastrianism and Nestorian Christianity had a considerable following in China along with the native Taoism and Confucianism. An Arab embassy visited the court of T'ai-T'sung. The Emperor allowed them to build a mosque for the Arab traders in Canton. The mosque survives, it is said, to this day and is one of the oldest mosques in the world.

In administration and social reforms also T'ai-T'sung introduced his liberal and judicious views. In the Byzantine empire which was contemporary with T'ang China, there were horrible punishments such as the mutilation of limbs, removal of eyes, ears and tongues, and there were barbaric tortures applied, particularly in religious quarrels. But China under T'ai-T'sung remained free from such horrible punishments. Numerous death sentences under the old code were abolished; and it was made a rule that no such sentence should be passed on any criminal until the Emperor had ratified it after fasting and reflecting upon it

for three days. The ministers were encouraged to criticise the Emperor's actions and to express their free opinion on his policy.

During this period the famous Chinese traveller Hsuan Tsang returned from a pilgrimage to India and recorded some precise observations about his journey and stay in India. The influence of Buddhism on Chinese philosophy and art became profound at this time. The fine arts, especially painting, reached a high state of perfection. The laws were codified and the civil service examinations were further developed. The *Pekin Gazette*, sometimes called the oldest newspaper in the world, came into existence for the publication of imperial decrees and other state documents. This period also witnessed great material prosperity. Chinese ships sailed as far as the Persian Gulf, and Haroun-al-Raschid sent his envoys to the T'ang Emperor of China. It may be said that the darkest days of the Middle Ages in the West were the brightest days of China.

### THE SUNG DYNASTY

By the end of the ninth century A.D. the T'ang ceased to control China. Then followed a period of civil war which lasted for about fifty years until unity was attained once again by the Sung dynasty. The Sung rulers were generally peaceful. They loved the finer things of life and did not hanker after conquests and military glory. Chinese fine arts, particularly painting, reached a high stage of development during this period. Books multiplied and were made easily available with the wider use of the printing press. As a consequence study circles were formed and many philosophical schools were enriched by the ideas which Buddhism had brought into China. It is said that tea spread throughout north China during the Sung period.

In the eleventh century Wang An-Shih, the leader of the radical party and prime minister of the Sung Emperor Shen Tsung, carried out his great reforms which resembled the state socialism of the nineteenth century. The Chinese peasants, like the peasants of all countries of those days, were heavily in debt to moneylenders. Wang An-Shih made the state 'the poor man's banker' instead. Standard rates and conditions of sale were introduced, government stores were arranged and famine relief was provided. Every family had to bear the burden of military defence and had to keep two horses against the need of cavalry remounts. Wang An-Shih also changed the existing educational system by making it of more practical use for obtaining the necessities of life. The results of the reforms were seen in the increase of the population and the absence of rebellion within the country.

Great things were also happening behind the pacifism of the Sung emperors. The Tartars conquered kingdoms of their own in portions of north China. But the Sung dynasty continued to rule south China for another hundred and fifty years, that is, till about the end of the thirteenth century when they were overthrown by the Mongols, whose regime in China was styled the Yuan dynasty.

### THE MONGOLS

From the beginning of history the deserts and pasture lands of Central Asia have been inhabited by various tribes of nomads. The Mongols were only one of those tribes in a long succession. The origin of the name 'Mongol' is still uncertain. Some European scholars have traced it to the Chinese word *meng* meaning 'brave'. The homes of the Mongols were white tents, where they lived by hunting and



tending herds. They dressed in furs and their chief food was milk and meat.

The early history of the Mongols is obscure. They were perhaps closely related to the Turks, and like the Turks they lived divided into many nomad clans and tribes in the regions lying between the river Amur and the Great Wall of China. In the twelfth century the Mongols were united under their supreme leader Temuchin who acquired world-wide fame under the title of Chengiz Khan.\*

### CHENGIZ KHAN

The birth-place of Temuchin was near the Onon river. At his father's death he was only thirteen years old, and his mother acted as regent. During this period several of the tribes which had submitted to Temuchin's father declared their independence. But it is said that the mother-regent mounted her horse, and taking the Royal standard called the *Tuk*, in her hand, she led her people against the rebels and brought many of them under control. When Temuchin came of age he also had to continue a prolonged struggle against his enemies until he felt himself strong enough to proclaim himself (1206 A.D.) the ruler of an empire. Then, he adopted the name and title of Chengiz Khan. The capital city of Chengiz Khan was Karakorum.

In order to follow Chengiz's career of conquest we should understand the political divisions of Asia and Eastern Europe in the beginning of the thirteenth century. To the east of Chengiz Khan's territory lay the kingdom of the Hsia or Tanguts. Further east and south, China was divided into two large kingdoms—the Kin or Golden Tartars ruled in the northern kingdom with their capital near about

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\* Chinese, Chen-ze = 'perfect warrior'; the name is also spelt as Genghiz or Jenghiz or Jengiz Khan.

the modern Peking while the southern kingdom was under the Chinese national kings of the Sung dynasty who ruled from Lin-an (modern Hangchow). Northern India was being ruled by the Slave dynasty. In south western Asia the power of the Seljuks was in the process of decay. The Abbasid Caliphs somehow maintained an existence in Baghdad, but the whole of their eastern empire was broken into small feudal states ruled by princes called *Atabegs* who, as a matter of form only, recognized the supreme power of the Caliph and the Sultan, but were independent for all practical purposes. In fact a separate empire, called the Khwarizmian (Khivan) empire, was founded (1141 A.D.) including northern Persia, Transoxania and Mesopotamia with its capital at Samarkand. Egypt and Syria were still under the successors of Saladin. In Europe, the Byzantine empire somehow maintained its difficult existence while pressed from the south by the Turks and from the north by the Slavs. The Slavs mingled with numerous other tribes and carved out two kingdoms in European Russia. The capital of the northern kingdom was Novgorod, and that of the southern was Kiev. Further west, between Russia and the Holy Roman Empire, lay the kingdoms of Poland and Hungary.

After completing the conquest of Mongolia and organizing his own 'tent' or headquarters Chengiz Khan turned his attention to the civilized kingdoms that lay to the south. He first attacked the Tangut kingdom and compelled its ruler to pay him annual tribute. The next task of Chengiz was the Kin war. The Kins were his worst enemies, but they lacked unity and had soon to surrender their capital as the result of several defeats. After defeating the Kin army and securing a firm footing inside the Great Wall, Chengiz despatched his armies against the Chinese emperor. All his expeditions were successful. The Mongols refused

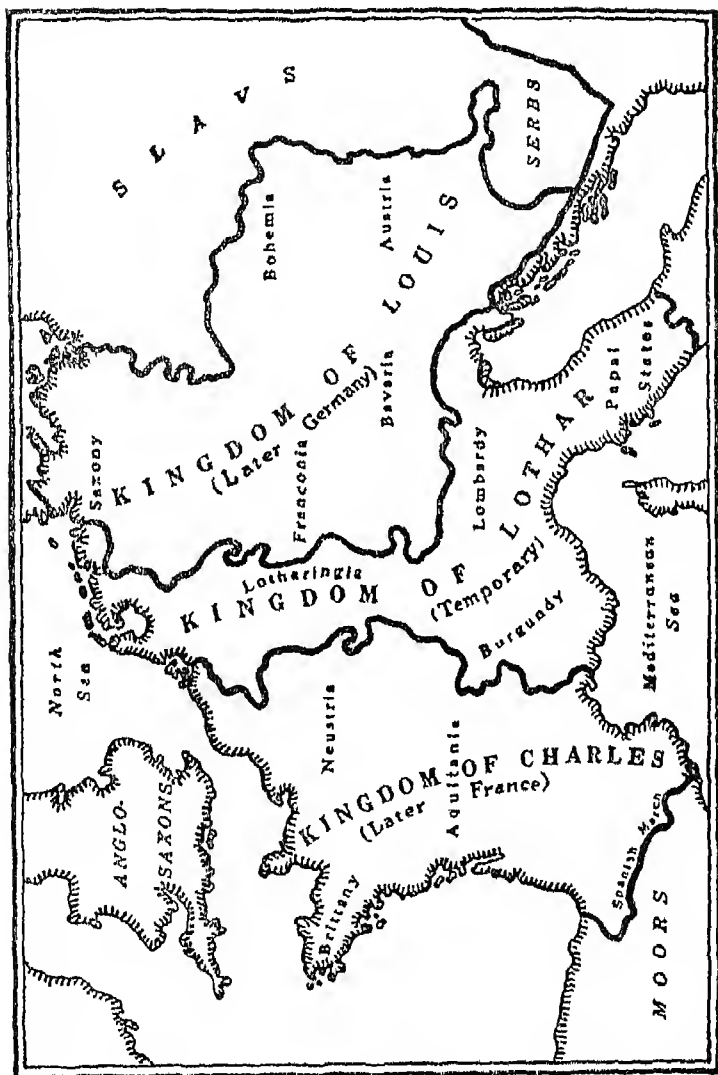


FIG. 21.

to pay tribute due to the emperor to which they had long been subject.

The success of the Mongols in China excited the fear and jealousy of Muhammad, the Shah of the Khwarizmian empire. He sent an embassy to Chengiz Khan in order to know exactly the strength of the Mongol conqueror. The embassy was well received by Chengiz Khan who, in his turn, sent his own ambassadors with a trading caravan to Muhammad. But the Mogol traders were seized and put to death by the order of Muhammad's governor at Otrar. So war became inevitable. Chengiz Khan marched out with a large army, took the offending city by assault after a siege of five months, captured Bokhara, the centre of science in those days, and hastened to Samarkand where Muhammad had abandoned his army. Thence he pursued Muhammad's son Jalaluddin of Ghazni as far as the Indus. At this time he received the news that the inhabitants of Herat had rebelled. To punish this act of rebellion he sent an army of 80,000 men who after a siege of six months took the city and took vengeance on it by putting to the sword, it is said, 16,00,000 of its inhabitants. He then returned to Mongolia by way of Balkh and Samarkand.

While Chengiz Khan was conquering Central Asia two of his generals, Jebe and Sabutai, advanced into Southern Russia. The Russian princes assembled an opposing force on the Dnieper. Here they received envoys from the Mongol camp whom they barbarously put to death. Then followed a great battle on the river Kalka, in which the Russians were utterly routed. The victors returned to Mongolia gorged with booty.

Shortly after his return from Central Asia Chengiz died (1227 A.D.) while he was on an expedition against the rebel chief of Tangut. At his death he left an empire extending from the Black Sea to the Pacific Ocean.

Chengiz Khan is often mentioned with Attila and Tamarlane as one of the 'Scourges of God', but this view is hardly justified. Like Attila and Tamarlane, Chengiz was a great conqueror who overthrew his enemies with great rapidity and uniform success. But unlike the other two, Chengiz was far more than a conqueror. He organized a vast empire which long survived his death. And though he was born and educated in the desert with no past traditions from which he could draw lessons, he practised at his court, all the elements of the modern ideal of a state—justice, tolerance and discipline. It has been said that multitudes of his opponents including common soldiers and generals went over to his side and were given service under him. If Chengiz was cruel to his enemies it was because they offered resistance and behaved treacherously; and severe measures were, therefore, necessary and justified by the laws of war or the policy of those days. One great characteristic of Chengiz Khan was that he never waged war on religious grounds. He was a follower of his tribal religion called *Shamanism*, worshipping the Everlasting Blue Sky, but there gathered round his council-table Taoists, Christians and Muslims, and he was equally just to all.

#### THE MONGOL EMPIRE AFTER CHENGIZ KHAN

After the death of Chengiz Khan his great empire was divided among his four sons of whom Ogdai was named as the Great Khan. During Ogdai's reign Mongol power expanded eastward and westward exacting submission from the western Seljuk sultanates and pouring into Europe like a deluge which threatened as Attila had once threatened, to submerge the whole of eastern Europe. The head of the Mongol expedition in Europe was Batu, the grandson of Chengiz. In Batu the Mongols found 'a general who was

quite equal to Alexander, Hannibal, Marlborough or Napoleon, alike in the scope of his enterprises, the difficulties he surmounted and the success he achieved'. Nothing could arrest his conquering career. He swept over eastern and southern Russia, carried fire and sword into Hungary, and defeated the Poles and Germans in the battle of Leignitz in Silesia. Subsequently he established his own Khanate in the region of the lower Volga under the name of the Golden Horde, with Sarai as the capital. For two centuries thereafter the Khanate of the Golden Horde acted as suzerain of all Russia, levying tribute and raising recruits in the armies but leaving alone, or hardly interfering with, the Russian church. It has been supposed that Batu used cannon and gun-powder and had highly skilled Chinese engineers in his armies. Whether this was true or not, Batu showed wonderful military strategy and tactics in conducting his men and making them uniformly successful against formidable foes who were overwhelming in number. Batu's generalship has not been adequately recognized by most historians (probably because he played no important part in the affairs of Western Europe).

After the death of Ogdai there was a revolution in Mongolia in which the family of Ogdai was displaced by Tului's son Mangu who became the Great Khan in 1251. Mangu nominated his brother Kublai Khan as Governor of China. Both Mangu and Kublai were engaged in the affairs of the Far East and crushed the power of the Kins and subjugated the Sung empire of South China and advanced upto the kingdom of Annam. Another brother of Mangu, Hulagu, attacked Tibet, captured Baghdad after a massacre of the entire population and conquered Syria and almost the whole of Muhammadan Asia excluding India.

Mangu was a greater organizer. His government had many departments with well-defined business for each, and

the chief officers were appointed mostly on merit. A Nestorian Christian was made his chancellor having charge of the finances and of the department of home affairs. Mangu was also a strict disciplinarian. It is said that once he punished his own son and some soldiers for overrunning a field of grain while hunting in an enemy's country. The Court of Mangu was visited by learned men of all religions—Christian, Muhammadan and Buddhist. William of Rubruck, envoy of Louis IX of France, lived in the Court of Mangu and wrote a graphic account of it. He says that missionaries of different religions were always trying to convert the Great Khan, but he remained neutral and urged toleration for all. Mangu died in 1259; and it took almost a year before the Mongol leaders from distant parts of the vast empire—from Hungary, Kipchak, Syria, Persia, Scind and China—could gather together and elect Kublai as the Great Khan.

### KUBLAI KHAN

Kublai ended the Sung dynasty which had been ruling in China for more than three hundred years (960-1280) and became the founder of the Yuan dynasty. He moved his capital from Mongolia to a place which was known among the Mongols as Cambulac or Kaanbaligh and later as Peking. From Cambulac the Great Khan pushed southward and brought almost the whole of China under his sway. On the west his sovereignty was acknowledged by the Khans of the Golden Horde as well as by the family of Kublai's brother Hulagu whose dominion extended from the Oxus to the Arabian desert. Kublai also conquered Korea and sent expeditions into Japan, Annam, Champa and Java. The expedition to Japan was repulsed and totally destroyed and only three men are said to have escaped to tell the tale. Similarly the expedition to Java, after temporary

success, was repulsed by the *Raja* of Madjapahit and was forced to re-embark. Annam and Champa, however, acknowledged the vassalage of the Great Khan. Thus Kublai was the sovereign of the largest empire that had ever come under the control of one man.

In ruling his vast empire Kublai pursued a wise policy, interfering little with the laws and customs of different nationalities, though he seems to have been partial to Christianity and European culture. It was at this time that the great Venetian traveller Marco Polo visited China. Marco Polo describes in glowing colours the magnificence of the Great Khan—his splendid court, his great public works, and his patronage of art and literature. Polo even entered the Khan's service and went on several expeditions to distant parts of the Mongol realm. During the reign of Kublai and his successors there appears to have been considerable intercourse between Europe and China. Ambassadors from the Pope of Rome as well as Christian missionaries and merchants visited Cathay, as China was then called by Europeans.

After the death of Kublai the history of the Mongols is one of divisions and decay. Indeed, Kublai had himself sown the seeds of decay. According to Mongol custom every successive ruler was to be elected at a general assembly of Khans. Kublai Khan' abolished this practice and substituted in its place, the Chinese custom of hereditary succession, the throne passing regularly from the father to the eldest son. This naturally was a cause of discontent among the Mongol princes some of whom aspired after the throne. Another cause of discontent was that Kublai neglected the true functions of Government, and the people's sufferings increased beyond endurance. Disturbances broke out, which were followed by divisions in the empire.

The first great division was the main Mongol empire



including China and Mongolia where the successors of Kublai reigned for about a century with Peking as their capital. This was a period of natural convulsions as well as of political revolutions, for though the government was beneficial, it was regarded as alien and therefore unacceptable. At last about the middle of the fourteenth century a Buddhist priest Chu Yuen-Chang was so moved at the misery of his countrymen that he threw off his priestly robes and became the leader of a rebel army. He soon captured Peking and gained possession of the whole of China. The Yuan dynasty was overthrown and the ex-Buddhist priest became the founder and first sovereign of a new native dynasty known as the Ming ('brilliant') dynasty.

The second great division of the Mongol Empire, that of the Ilkhans, comprised Persia. About the time when Kublai Khan was ruling his empire wisely and with humanity his brother Hulagu was prosecuting his conquests in Western Asia, sacking city after city, and sparing neither man, woman or child. Hulagu's first expedition was against Persia where the Ismailites or Assassins were in revolt. Their terror of the Mongol army soon reduced the rebels into submission. The next expedition of Hulagu was in the direction of Baghdad to attack the last Abbasid Caliph and his Seljuk protectors. After the fall of Baghdad Hulagu perpetrated a massacre of the entire population. Then he took Syria, but his further advance was checked by his defeat by the Mamluks who thus saved Egypt, the last refuge of Moslem culture. Hulagu took the title of Ilkhan and ruled Western Asia in practical independence acknowledging nominally the Great Khan as supreme overlord. The Ilkhans, as the successors of Hulagu were called, ruled Persia for about a century and were finally overthrown by Timur.

Besides the two branches of Mongols in China and Persia there were other important Mongol states—the

Golden Horde of the Volga, the state of Kipchak in Russia, the Siberian state between Kipchak and Mongolia and a state in Turkestan. By the middle of the fourteenth century there arose small independent tribal chiefs engaged in constant feuds and rivalries with one another. There was however a temporary revival of Mongol power towards the latter part of the fourteenth century when Timur the Mongol (also called Tamerlane) became King of Samarkand.

Timur claimed to be a descendant of Chengiz Khan but he was a Turk. He was lame of one leg, hence he is known in history as Timur-i-lang or Timur the Lame or Tamerlane. After usurping the power of his master he declared himself the ruler of Samarkand and carried on a ruthless war for the next twenty-five years. He overran Khorasan, Jurjan, Afghanistan and Kurdistan, completely defeated the Khan of the Golden Horde, seized Baghdad and Damascus and carried his arms to the banks of the Ural and the Volga. Timur also turned his attention to the conquest of India. He entered Delhi where Muhammad Tuglak was reigning, with the promise that the city should be spared and then he gave it over to five days' sack and massacre (1398 A.D.). Then he marched back against Anatolia (Asia Minor). In the decisive battle of Angora (1402 A.D.), the Ottoman Turks were completely defeated. The Ottoman Sultan Bajazet was taken prisoner—to die in captivity. After this victory Timur received the homage of the Byzantine emperor and organized an invasion of China. But he died on his way thither in 1405 A.D., at the age of seventy.

The vast empire of Timur extending from northern India to Hungary collapsed immediately after his death. It had nothing to hold it together, as Timur unlike Chengiz Khan did not do anything to organize it. He was a zealous Muhammedan of the Shiah sect who massacred all who

resisted him, and destroyed alike the heretics and the infidels. His deeds 'were written in the oceans of blood that he spilt, and the blood that he spilt is his sole monument'.

The history of the Mongols is in the main a terrible story of ravage and destruction. But while we deplore the destruction we must not lose sight of the other side of the shield. It should be observed that what was swept away had already become stagnant and had been suffering from the results of stagnation, vice and mental disease. After the Mongol destruction there came a 'Renaissance' both in Asia and Europe and the unification of the greater part of the two continents under one sovereign authority first at Karakorum and then at Peking promoted international relations. The policy which lay behind this unification was strictly political and had nothing to do with religion. For a while the grant routes across the deserts and mountains became as safe as the king's highway. This was as important for the commerce of the Middle Ages as were the discoveries of Columbus and Vasco da Gama for that of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The big merchants of Venice and Genoa entered into direct relations with Persia, Central Asia, China and other countries which had not been previously traversed by Europeans.

Secondly, in the eleventh and twelfth centuries the life of the demoralized cities of Asia was endangered by an impending apoplexy which could be averted by much blood-letting and the inoculation of fresh and vigorous blood from the uncontaminated desert. So when the wave of destruction was over, the contact of the different cultures, Persian, Arabic, Chinese and Indian, produced new art and literature. This was particularly the case in Persia and China. Persian affairs were much improved when the descendants of Hulagu—the Ilkhans—gave up their heathen superstitions and embraced the religion of Islam with its

tremendous vitality. There was thus a rejuvenation of Persian architecture and painting, and three of the greatest and most famous poets of Persia, Sa'di of Shiraz, Faridud-Din Attar and Jalalud-Din Rumi and many other great poets flourished about this time. Similarly, it would be difficult to point out any epoch of world history which could rival the vigorous life that marked the reign of the great Kublai Khan in China.

Thirdly, in Europe the Mongol invasion in spite of its reckless ferocity had a quickening influence which revived her people from the lethargy caused by the influence of feudal institutions and internecine wars. It also acted as one of the causes of the later Renaissance. It thrust the Ottoman Turks upon Constantinople and was thus ultimately responsible for the destruction of the Byzantine Empire and the dispersion of Greek scholars over the different countries of Europe.

#### THE MONGOL OR MUGHAL RULE IN INDIA

More than a hundred years after the death of Timur one of his descendants founded a Mongol or Mughal dynasty which ruled for more than three hundred years. His name was Babar. Babar was a descendant of Timur in the fifth generation and also of Chengiz Khan from his mother's side. His ancestors had conquered and ruled the whole of Asia; and so Babar thought that he had a hereditary right to rule any part of Asia of which he could take possession. In fact, after defeating Ibrahim Lodi in the first battle of Panipath in 1526 A.D., Babar put forward a hereditary claim to rule over India.

During the reign of the Mughals, India advanced far towards the establishment of a national monarchy which had disappeared from India after the death of Harsa-

vardhana. The history of India for nine centuries is a history of several dynasties struggling for supremacy in northern India. During the early part of this period Kashmir had more intimate relations with China than India. In fact it sometimes formed a part of the dominion of the Chinese Emperor, and the kings of Kashmir received their investiture from him. Its king Lalitaditya carried his victorious arms to Tibet and the upper Oxus valley.

In the beginning of the eighth century Dahir, king of Sind, was killed in a battle by the invading Arabs. The widowed queen, Rani Bai, fought desperately, but the enemy was too strong. When no hope was left for the defence of the capital city, a strange scene occurred, 'precursors of many others in India but without any parallel in the history of the world'.\* To save their honour the Rani and the women and children of the city burnt themselves while their fathers and brothers sword in hand rushed into the enemy lines and perished to a man. Thus Sind with a portion of the Punjab came under the control of the Arabs.

Throughout the eleventh and twelfth centuries there were frequent Muslim invasions from the north-western frontier. As a result of these invasions the military and economic resources of north-western India were exhausted and the country lay open for Muslim occupation. But one important event of this period was that Alberuni of Khiva, the leading scientist of his time, followed Mahmud when the latter invaded the Punjab. Alberuni learned Sanskrit and wrote his invaluable book *Tahkik-i-Hind* (Inquiry into India) which remains one of the chief sources of information regarding medieval India.

From the latter half of the twelfth century a new era

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\* Majumdar—*History of India*, pp. 361-362.

of Muslim conquest began. Shab-ud-Din Muhammad Ghorî took advantage of a quarrel between two Indian kings, quickly conquered Sind and wrested the Punjab from the Ghaznavids. Though his advance was for some time checked by his disastrous defeat in the first battle of Tarain, the verdict was reversed the following year by a second battle in the same place where the sun of Hindu glory set for ever. Henceforth the Muhammadan empire or Sultanate of Delhi was continuous for some three hundred years. This continuity was not the reign of a single dynasty. There were the Slave Dynasty, the Khiljîs, Tughlaks and Lodîs.

#### BABAR, THE FOUNDER OF THE MONGOL OR MUGHAL EMPIRE

Before Babar invaded India he had been, for a time, the ruler of Samarkand and Farghana, but he was forced to flee over the Hindukush to Afghanistan. There his followers increased and he made himself master of Kabul. Then he laid claim to the Punjab as a descendant of Timur who had conquered it a hundred and seven years before. India was in a state of division and Babar without much difficulty occupied the Punjab and Delhi and Agra after the decisive battle of Panipath against Ibrahim Lodî. The two obstacles in the way of Babar's further advance were the Rajputs and the Afghans. After his victorious battles of Khanua against the Rajputs under Rana Samgram Singh of Mewar and of Gogra against the Afghans under Nusrat Khan of Bengal, Babar practically became the Emperor of Northern India. Babar wrote an excellent autobiography which is the most important source of our information about him.

Babar died at the untimely age of forty-seven, leaving to his son Humayun the task of organizing his conquests.

Humayun found a stiff enemy in Sher Shah, an Afghan noble who by superior military tactics and brilliant power of organization drove Humayun out of India and became the undisputed master of Northern India. But the Afghan revival was short. Humayun's son Akbar, a contemporary of the great English queen Elizabeth, regained the throne of Delhi after the second battle of Panipath.

Akbar has been spoken of as 'one of the greatest Kings of history' deserving the same distinctive attention as has been shown to Constantine the Great or Charlemagne. For all practical purposes Akbar became the master of the whole of Northern India and Afghanistan, and towards the south he advanced as far as the river Godavari.

The methods by which Akbar consolidated his vast empire showed his great administrative ability. The Emperor used to have three daily meetings to deal with important appointments, grants and payments and the hearing of petitions from Governors and nobles. The Emperor was also the supreme judge in all cases. The entire military organization was based on the *mansabdari* system, somewhat like the feudal system. The mansabdars were classified into thirty-three grades ranging from mansabdars of 20 men to mansabdars of 10,000 men. The whole empire was divided into fifteen *subahs* or provinces, and the Subadar, officially styled *Nizam*, was the head of the provincial executive. It may be observed that much of the system of Akbar's administration was taken over and continued by the English when they became the successors to the Mughal Emperors.

Akbar, on his own initiative, pursued a policy of conciliation towards the Hindus. He secured the assistance of Man Singh, Todar Mal and others, by which the Mughal hold in India was made much stronger than that of Turko-Afghan rulers. Officers were appointed on merit only with-

out reference to race or religion. This policy converted the Mughal Empire, in one generation, from a foreign government into a national state.

Akbar wanted to cement the different faiths in India into one universal religion. For this purpose he evolved a religion of his own described as *Din-i-Ilahi*, based partly on Zoroastrianism. This new religion, however, was not popular.

Amid the devastations and general disorder of the centuries following the death of Harshavardan, Indian missionaries and monks preserved their culture in their monasteries just as the Christian missionaries did in Europe during the dark days following the destruction of the Empire of Rome and the Frankish empire of Charlemagne. By the end of the reign of Akbar, and mainly due to his exertions there was a development of a new culture in India. Religious teachers arose, who rendered a great service to the cause of Hindu-Muslim unity. The Hindus began to worship many Muslim Pirs (saints) and the Muslims began to show respect for Hindu Gods. The court language was in Persian. As such many high-caste Hindus seeking position in the state had to learn this language. Highclass literature both in Sanskrit and Hindi was produced during this period. It has been said that Akbar did not understand the necessity for a general educational scheme for India, but we may say in the language of H. G. Wells that even in this matter though he knew less he did more for India 'than the British who succeeded him. Some of the British Viceroys have aped his magnificence, his costly tents and awnings, his palatial buildings and his elephants of state, but none have gone far enough beyond the political outlook of this medieval Turkoman to attempt that popular education which is an absolute necessity to India before she can play her fitting part in the commonweal of mankind'.



The great Mughal empire which Akbar left behind was ably maintained by his son Jahangir and his grandson Shah Jahan, the builder of the Tajmahal at Agra. The empire reached its zenith during the reign of Shah Jahan's son Aurangzeb (1658-1707 A.D.). It comprised the whole of India except the extreme south. But during the last years of his reign signs of dissolution were evident. The Marhattas were organized under the great leadership of Sivaji and they became the bitter enemy of the Mughals. The Sikhs awakened to a new life under the inspiration of Guru Govinda Singh. Besides there were sporadic Hindu risings throughout the empire. After the death of Aurangzeb the situation was rendered worse by the war of succession among his sons. All this prepared the way for the establishment of the supremacy of some European nation who had already made fortified factories in India.

## CHAPTER XXIII

### FORMATION OF NATIONAL STATES: ENGLAND AND FRANCE

Feudalism once saved Europe from external enemies. By the thirteenth century it became necessary to save Europe from the evils\* of Feudalism. The remedy of the evils came from powerful kings who overthrew the multitude of petty feudal chiefs and consolidated well-ordered national states. In this task they had on their side the support of the clergy and the city merchants. The Church was against private war and violence in order to protect the interests of religion. The merchants welcomed the growth of the royal power because it made the roads secure and provided better conditions for trade. So the Church anointed the body of the King with sacred oil at the coronation to show that royal authority had religious sanction; and the merchant class, known in France as the *bourgeoisie*, contributed taxes to fill the royal treasury and acted sometimes as faithful royal officials. With this background we will now endeavour to indicate briefly the evolution of political divisions in France and England.

#### I. FRANCE

It may be recalled that by the Treaty of Verdun (843) the western part of the empire of Charlemagne was given to Charles the Bald. This part was the origin of modern France. Charles and his Carolingian successors were weak rulers during whose reign feudal lords gained possession

\* See the Chapter on Feudalism

of royal lands and authority. The crown passed back and forth between the family of Capets and that of Carolingians. Finally, High Capet, Duke of Paris, was elected King by the great lords and high clergy of the territory. This event occurred in 987 A.D., and may be taken as the beginning of the national history of France. The descendants of High Capet are known as the Capetians, and they, with only two seriously disputed successions, ruled France until the French Revolution at the close of the eighteenth century.

The Capetians were confronted with a great problem in the creation of modern France. Before High Capet was elected king he bore the title of Duke of Paris; and he had little authority outside his small duchy which included Paris and the territory round it. The rest of France was divided into a number of duchies and counties. The most important of these were the duchies of Normandy, Aquitaine and Burgundy and the counties of Flanders, Champagne and Toulouse. The rulers of these provinces were in theory the feudal vassals of the king, but they ruled with almost absolute power without paying any attention to the royal commands. During the tenth and eleventh centuries the Capetian kings could not do much to remedy such a state of affairs.

The first of the Capetians who laid the foundation of a real monarchy and central government in France was Louis the Fat (Louis VI). He waged war against the numerous robber Barons (castellans) who oppressed travellers and merchants and he destroyed their fortresses, and to some extent restored the prestige of the monarchy as the defender of law and order and the protector of the Church. But Louis only made a beginning. Considerable headway was made during the reign of his famous grandson Philip II, usually known as Philip Augustus.

## PHILIP AUGUSTUS (1180-1223 A.D.)

Philip Augustus may be called the second founder of the French monarchy. Medieval France owed more to him than to any other of her rulers. Before Philip's accession to the throne, Henry II of England had become master of the greater part of France through inheritance and royal marriages. So long as Henry II lived there was little chance of expelling him from his possessions in France. After his death, however, Philip II fought successfully against Henry II's weak son King John, and recovered Normandy and Anjou from him by gaining a decisive victory at the battle of Bouvines.\* Philip gained other victories also by which the Capetian domain, that is, the lands which the king himself ruled directly as feudal lord, increased both in wealth and territory.

Philip Augustus not only extended the crown lands but he strengthened his control over all classes of his subjects by appointing officials dependant upon the royal court. Most of these officials were chosen from the middle classes, and the nobility were pushed into the background. An army of men directly paid by the crown was formed to prevent invasions and punish the rebellious Barons. The King also supported the University, built the Cathedral of Notre Dame, made Paris the centre of the French government and encouraged trade by granting charters to the merchants of many towns.

## St. Louis IX (1226-1270 A.D.)

After Philip Augustus, the next great King of the Capetian line was his grandson Louis IX. Louis IX reigned

\* The battle of Bouvines may be regarded as one of the most important battles in European history. It gave the Imperial Crown to Frederick II, it gave Magna Carta to the English people, and it decided that the King of Paris was to be the master of the whole of France.

for about 45 years (1226-1270 A.D.); and his long reign is interesting from many points of view. He represented a type of medieval Catholicism at its best and he was usually called Saint Louis. He read much of religious literature, often fasted, fed the poor at his own table and washed their feet and, like St. Francis, waited on the lepers. He performed all his penances in private. In his court life he proved himself to be a fearless warrior and an energetic ruler anxious to be just to all his subjects. There was a great rising against him of all the feudal nobles of Flanders, Brittany, Gascony, Languedoc and Burgundy who allied themselves with the English King Henry III. But St. Louis quickly put down the revolt by gaining a victory over his enemies at the Battle of Saintes. This battle has been taken by some as marking the final overthrow of feudalism in France. St. Louis was then recognized as the first power in Europe.

St. Louis did much to strengthen French monarchy and improve the system of government. His court assumed special forms for dealing with special subjects. Thus, the Royal Council was for the consideration of foreign affairs, the Chamber of Accounts for the disposal of financial matters, and the *Parlement*, the great royal court of justice, heard appeals and looked to the rights of the crown against the claims of the feudal lords. St. Louis also extended the institution of the *Baillies*, who resembled the *Missi* of Charlemagne, to see that the king's justice was done throughout his domains and the king's dues were properly collected.

Only one thing blemished the reign of St. Louis and that was the introduction of the Inquisition into France. Like all true Catholics of his time he tried to repress heresy. The moving force, of course, came from the Pope of Rome. As a result thousands were put to the sword without regard

to their guilt or innocence, age or sex, and hymns of bloodshed were sung to the Holy Ghost.

Due to St. Louis's organization his grandson Philip IV, also known as Philip the Fair (1283-1314 A.D.), was the first to play the role of an absolute monarch in France. He added the country of Champagne to the royal lands and instituted taxes on the trade of the towns and on the income of the nobles. To gain the support of the nation in a quarrel with the Pope, Philip IV summoned (1302) a national assembly which was known as the *Estates General*. It was composed of representatives from the three principal classes or 'estates' of the kingdom—the clergy, the nobles and the city merchants. The Estates General remained, unlike the Parliament of England, in the control of the king. It was called at his will to give him 'advice' or grant him money.

Philip IV was succeeded by his three sons. With the death of the third, in 1328 A.D., the House of Valois ascended the French throne.

## 2. ENGLAND

The history of Britain, the early name of England, properly began with the coming of Julius Caesar (55 and 54 B.C.). In his book called his Commentaries Caesar has left us an account of the early inhabitants of this country. They were the Celts, akin in race and language to the Gauls who were living on the other side of the English Channel. A century later Britain became a thoroughly Roman province and remained so for more than three hundred years. At last, in the beginning of the fifth century the Romans were compelled to withdraw from Britain to defend Rome from the invasions of the barbarians.

Before the barbarian Odoacer deposed the Roman Emperor Romulus Augustulus, three north Germanic tribes—the Jutes, Angles and Saxons—were already beginning to settle along the coasts of Britain. Later they came in larger numbers and gave the name 'England' (from Angla-land, i.e., the land of the Angles). The new invaders—the English—were at first pagans. They, like their brethren on the continent, took much pleasure in plundering Churches and murdering the priests. The old Celtic Christianity established during the Roman occupation was soon blotted out. But in 597 A.D. a new wave of Christianity reached England when St. Augustine sent by Pope Gregory the Great landed in Kent with a band of forty followers. Due to the missionary zeal of St. Augustine and his followers, Roman Catholic Christianity soon spread over the whole island, but Christianity did not immediately give political unity. The petty kingdoms continued to fight between themselves until, in the ninth century, Egbert, King of Wessex, and a contemporary of Charlemagne, brought almost all the states of England under his overlordship.

The grandson of Egbert, Alfred the Great, was the most celebrated of the kings of Wessex. Alfred was, like Charlemagne, a powerful warrior, a good administrator and a great patron of learning. During his reign the Northmen, or Danes as the English called them, who were already ravaging France, conquered a large district north of the Thames. Alfred however, defeated them in a great battle and forced them to accept the treaty of Wedmore. By the terms of the treaty the Danes occupied the north-eastern part of England known as the Danelaw, and they accepted Christianity as their religion.

The successors of Alfred won back much of the Danelaw, but a second invasion of the Danes occurred about the beginning of the eleventh century, and their leader Canute

(Knut) succeeded in making himself King of England. The Danish rule was, however, very brief. Edward the Confessor, of the line of the West-Saxons, was soon restored. Edward was the last of the Saxon line of kings. He left no direct heir. This gave an excuse to William, Duke of Normandy to claim the English throne. In 1066 he invaded England, won a great victory in the battle of Hastings (also called battle of Senlac) and became King of England.

### THE NORMAN CONQUEST

The Norman conquest is a landmark in English history. It led to the advance of England in many ways. William now known as William the Conqueror introduced Norman Feudalism, but he took care that it should not weaken the power of the king. The government was centralized, trade and industry flourished, and the Norman influence enriched the English language and literature. In short, the Norman conquest was not a simple change of dynasty. It added a new element of vigour to the English race. For some years the invaders remained a separate people. But by the end of the twelfth century the two races were intermingled, and this fusion made them 'stronger, more vigorous, more active-minded and more varied in their occupation and interests'.\*

### HENRY II (1154-1198 A.D.)

William the Conqueror curtailed the power of the Feudal Barons by giving them lands scattered all over the country and by taking from them an oath called the Oath of Salisbury. By this his subjects promised that they would follow the King in times of war. This naturally created discontent among the Barons, and a period of Civil War

\* Robinson, p. 139.



and feudal anarchy followed during the reign of William's grandson Stephen. Then, order was restored by the next king, Henry II. In order to strengthen the central power Henry II reformed the royal courts. He sent out judges throughout the country so that the king's justice might be brought to every body at least once a year. He established the famous Court of the King's Bench to try all cases which came under his jurisdiction. The decision of the King's judges supplied the basis of the English Common Law. At the same time trial by jury instead of trial by ordeal became the settled law of the land. The illegal fortresses built by the Feudal Barons during the reign of Stephen were destroyed by Henry II. Henry II also tried to curtail the power of the Church by having authority to punish the bishops, if found guilty, in the royal courts and to prevent appeals from being sent to the Pope. This led to a quarrel between him and his old friend Thomas Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury. Though Becket was finally murdered, Henry II had to admit his defeat before the Church and avoid excommunication by doing penances. This event shows how dependent the people and monarch of those days were upon the Church and churchmen.

#### KING JOHN—THE MAGNA CARTA

By inheritance and conquest Henry II extended his domain over the whole of England, part of Scotland and most of France. Due to excellent administrative arrangements this vast dominion remained intact during the next reign, that of Richard the Lion-Hearted, even though Richard passed only a few months in England out of a reign of eleven years. The greater part of the English possessions in France were lost however by Richard's brother King John, one of the most detestable persons who ever wore a

crown. The reign of John has, however, been rendered memorable by one event. John's violence and injustice to the people made him very unpopular. At last the Barons united against him under the leadership of Langton, Archbishop of Canterbury, and forced him to sign *The Magna Carta* or Great Charter on June 15, 1215. The Magna Carta has been rightly called the 'corner stone of English liberties'. It contained sixteen clauses which were meant to establish the important principle that the King of England must rule by observing the old laws and customs of the land, and not by his arbitrary will. It also contained strong terms forbidding the king from levying new taxes without the consent of the Great Council which consisted of the barons, bishops and abbots.

#### GROWTH OF PARLIAMENT

During the long reign of John's son, Henry III, there were frequent meetings or parliaments of the Great Council, so that the name Parliament came into use. Parliament now seriously took up the task of guarding and adding to the terms of the Magna Carta. While Henry III refused to keep his promises the barons under the leadership of Simon de Montfort made war on him. During this struggle Simon called a Parliament (1265 A.D.) and gave it a 'representative' character. Up to this time the parliaments had been councils of barons and upper clergy; Simon summoned, in addition, representatives from the counties and boroughs. The war between Henry III and Simon ended with the death of the latter in the battle of Evesham.

After the death of Henry III, his son Edward I became king. Though an enemy of Simon, Edward I realized the wisdom of Simon's policy of governing the country by consulting the representatives of the people, specially at a

time when he was engaged in difficult wars with the French and the Scotch. So he summoned his Model Parliament (1295) based on the principle that 'in what concerned all, all should be consulted'. In this Parliament two knights from every shire and two burgesses from every town as well as the representatives of the lower clergy were present. The Model Parliament has been justly so called, because it has been the 'model' upon which, in the main, is based the Parliament which sits at Westminster today. But Parliament of the time of Edward I had only one House presided over by the King or his Chancellor. In the fourteenth century, in the reign of Edward III, it divided itself into two Houses—the House of Lords and the House of Commons. During the Hundred Years' War Parliament widened its control not only over taxation but also over the King's foreign policy. It went further. It deposed Richard II and elected Henry IV as his successor. By the end of the fifteenth century it was fixed that all money bills must originate in the House of Commons.

#### THE HUNDRED YEARS' WAR—ITS CAUSES

During the reign of the English King Edward III a war broke out between England and France. It lasted from 1338 to 1453, and is, therefore, known as the Hundred Years' War. But the term Hundred Years' War is a misnomer. It was not a continuous conflict, but a series of wars with intervals of peace. Historians, however, have been unable to find a better name for these wars.

The principal cause of the Hundred Years' War was territorial rivalry between the two rising national monarchies, England and France. When Edward III came to the throne England was growing up from feudalism to nationhood. Now, new nations, like all growing things, always

feel a desire to expand, and the natural field of expansion for the English nation was in France where the kings of England had once possessed large feudal estates and where Edward III still held Gascony. On the other hand the policy of all active French kings had been to drive the English out of Gascony in order to attain the unity of the 'natural boundaries' of France. So a conflict between the two countries seemed inevitable.

The differences between England and France turned upon two more questions. One was the question of Flanders, at this time the most industrial region in Europe. England under Edward III was making a profitable trade by exporting wool to Flemish looms. The French king wanted to ruin this trade by gaining control over Flanders. The second question related to the right of fishing in the North Sea and the English Channel. There were also other issues which complicated relations between the two countries. The French always helped the Scots in their wars of independence against the English and tried to destroy the profitable wine trade between Gascony and England. When finally Edward claimed the French throne through his mother, (though this was more a pretext than a cause), war was unavoidable.

#### THE EVENTS OF THE HUNDRED YEARS' WAR

The first important event of the Hundred Years' War took place in 1340 when the English won the great naval battle of Sluys and secured control over the English Channel. Six years later (1346) the battle of Crecy established English prestige in France, mainly on account of the English archers. Calais was captured in 1347. Then there was cessation of hostilities for several years on account of the visitation of the Black Death in England. But in 1356

another English army invaded France and won a signal victory at Poitiers. France was compelled to sign the Peace of Bretigny (1363) by which Edward gave up his claim to the French crown but acquired extensive territory in south France. There was a truce for 9 years. The war was renewed in 1369. This time it was disastrous for the English. All Aquitaine was lost to them except Bayonne and Bordeaux. Edward III's successor, King Richard II, was obliged to make a twenty-five years' truce.

When Henry V became King of England he saw his opportunity. His contemporary, Charles VI of France, was mad; and two rival parties, the Burgundians and the Orleanists, were struggling to control the government of France, as the two Houses of York and Lancaster were to struggle in England, fifty years later, to control the government of another mad King, Henry VI of England. Henry V now claimed the throne of France as the great-grandson of Edward III. All the English people supported him and Parliament made liberal grants of money.

Henry V won a decisive victory over the French at Agincourt (1415) by defeating an army six times the size of his own. Two years later he conquered Normandy and overran northern France. The French were compelled to sign the Treaty of Troyes (1420). By this Treaty, Henry became Agent for the mad King Charles VI, married his daughter Katherine, and was to succeed him as King of the French.

When Charles VI died, the French proclaimed the Dauphin as their King Charles VII, while the English proclaimed Henry V's son Henry VI as King of France. The English laid siege to Orleans. But at that time there appeared a romantic figure, a peasant girl named Joan of Arc, also known as the Maid of Orleans. She gained the confidence of Charles VII who gave her a small escort.

With this body she forced the English to raise the siege of Orleans, and she gained other successes. Ultimately she was burnt by the English as a witch. The French looked upon Joan as a saint and deliverer. She had rekindled a new spirit of patriotism among the French people who now laid aside their quarrels and fought desperately for their country. After the battle of Castillon (1453) the English were pushed out of France, retaining only Calais. This brought the Hundred Years' War to a close.

#### *RESULTS OF THE HUNDRED YEARS' WAR*

As a result of the Hundred Years' War the English kings lost their French possessions except Calais. This, in reality, was a blessing in disguise, for they were now free to devote their entire attention to their own country. The victories which the English had won roused among them a feeling of national unity unknown before. During the continuation of the war it was often necessary for the English kings to approach Parliament for grants of money. In return Parliament increased its power, but there was a demoralization of society for want of law and order. The nobles seized opportunity to fortify their castles and to maintain private armies. The way was thus prepared for the catastrophic civil war known as Wars of the Roses between the two Houses of Lancaster and York. At the end of this war the baronial aristocracy was wiped out to make room for the despotic Tudor kings who laid the foundations of the modern political and economic power of England.

In France also the effect of the Hundred Years' War was identical. Since the war was fought entirely on French soil that country was in a deplorable condition. Famine and pestilence broke out and many places became desolated.

But there was one gain. When the English were expelled from France (with the exception of Calais) the French were inspired by a strong feeling of nationalism. Since many of the feudal lords had been killed in battle during the Hundred Years' War, the crafty French King Louis XI (1461-1483) consolidated the royal position by bringing the remaining nobles under his control and obtained from the Estates General the right of levying a land tax called *taille* to maintain a national army and rule as an absolute monarch.

It should be observed that from this brief survey of the rise of national states in France and England two types of government became distinct. The French state was largely the creation of its kings who exercised absolute authority. The kings in England were also powerful; but in that country the tradition of checking royal absolutism by the people's will expressed through a representative assembly grew up early. This tradition was peculiar to the English nation. It was not till the French Revolution in the eighteenth century that this tradition was extended to France, and later, to all western countries.

## CHAPTER XXIV

### GERMANY AND ITALY: THE RIVALRY BETWEEN THE PAPACY AND THE HOLY ROMAN EMPIRE

While England and France were becoming strong national States, Germany and Italy were falling into political ruin. The German kings failed to establish any effective authority over the powerful feudal families who ruled great local divisions for themselves. One reason for this failure was that they, as heirs of the imperial title of Charlemagne, attempted to play the part of Emperors by ruling both Germany and Italy. The result was that they could not build up a strong central government in either country. The *stem duchies*, as the Germans called them, took advantage of the frequent absence of the Emperors in Italy and elsewhere to increase their own independent powers. Secondly, in the eleventh century a conflict broke out between the Emperors and the Popes over the question as to who had the higher rank. During the twelfth and thirteenth centuries the Emperors remained so very much occupied with struggles against the Popes and the Italian cities that they virtually allowed the German nobles to assume sovereign powers over their lands.

In Italy also no native line of kings could grow on account of constant civil strifes and the intervention of German Emperors in Italian affairs. There were three other powers which might have given a strong central government to Italy. These were the Papacy, the Byzantine Empire and the great Italian nobles. But the Popes remained for a long time the mere tools of the Roman nobles who, in their turn, were fighting among themselves



for the royal crown of Lombardy. The energy of the Byzantine Empire was exhausted in struggles against the Saracens. As a result Italy remained parcelled out into a number of political units—a Byzantine province in the south, a Papal patrimony in the centre, fiefs of the Lombard nobles in the north and a number of self-governing republics in different parts of the country. Both Germany and Italy were unable to achieve any political unity till the middle of the nineteenth century.

### HENRY THE FOWLER

At the beginning of the tenth century the line of Charlemagne came to an end in the eastern or German part of his empire. Then the chief duchies—Saxony, Bavaria, Franconia, Swabia and Thuringia elected Henry of Saxony, better known as Henry the Fowler, as their King. Henry the Fowler was a practical man. He realized the difficulties of his position and was content to remain a feudal king, tolerant of the dukes who paid him only a nominal allegiance. But he set himself to defend his duchy against invaders. These invaders were not Germanic Northmen but the Mongolian Magyars who repeatedly harried Germany. Like King Alfred of England, in similar circumstances, Henry gave an initial check to the Magyars and then bought a nine years' truce which he spent in strengthening his frontiers and winning victory over the marauders. However, the task of finally liberating his country from the Magyar danger was completed after Henry's death by his son Otto I.

### OTTO THE GREAT

Otto, called Otto the Great, came to the German throne with the approval of the German nobles. He succeeded for

the time being in weakening the power of the big duchies and giving them to members of his own family. He defeated the Slavs and the Hungarians and increased his power of offence and defence by organizing his army and strengthening the eastern frontiers of his kingdom by establishing new forms of government known as Marks.\* The rulers of these frontier governments were given extraordinary powers by which they could prevent the attacks of enemies. Henry the Fowler relied on the dukes as against the clergy. Otto I, on the other hand, looked to the clergy for his chief support against the ambitious nobles. He gave the clergy lands and privileges, and in return, they served him as faithful officials of the State. This close union between the German kingdom and the Church brought to Otto's ambitious mind the idea of reviving the Imperial title of Charlemagne. So he wanted to conquer Italy and gain authority over the Pope who was the recognized head of the German clergy.

Towards the middle of the tenth century Italy, as we have said, was hopelessly divided among contending parties and torn by civil strife. At last, out of these opposing forces there arose two principal claimants for the royal crown of Italy—Berengar II and Lothaire; and they agreed to reign together. But Lothaire died, leaving a girl widow named Adclaide. When Berengar wished to marry his son to her, she fled away and asked help of Otto I who was then the greatest king of western Europe. Otto crossed the Alps, himself married the rescued Adelaide and was generally acknowledged as King of Italy. He then sent ambassadors to the Pope to negotiate for the restoration of the Empire. But before he could force a Papal decision in his favour he had to return to Germany to put down a revolt.

\* Such forms of government were called Palatinates in the West.

Ten years later Otto marched again to Rome, and on February 2, 962, with his queen Adelaide received the Imperial crown from the hands of Pope John XII. The Pope received confirmation of the grant of territory by Peppin and in return did homage to the Emperor as the successor of Augustus, Constantine and Charlemagne. The union of northern Italy with the duchies of Germany became known as the Holy Roman Empire. It lasted for more than eight hundred years until it was finally dissolved by Napoleon in 1806. From the time of Otto's coronation the German kings regarded the title of Emperor as their right and always made expensive journeys to Rome to be crowned by the Pope.

It has to be observed that though the Holy Roman Empire founded by Otto was influenced by Carolingian tradition, it was less cosmopolitan and more German than the empire of Charlemagne. It did not include France and Spain. The bonds of union between Germany and Italy were loose and unnatural as the two countries lacked common interests. Charlemagne had been the ruler of the Church and State. Similarly, Otto made it a rule that no Pope should be recognized by the people of Rome till he had sworn allegiance to the Emperor. But soon the tables were turned. Otto's successors were unable to maintain their Imperial position, and a struggle for supremacy sprang up between the Papacy and the Empire.

### THE PAPACY AND THE EMPIRE

The Popes of Rome were early recognized, in theory at least, as the spiritual heads of the West. But down to the eleventh century throughout Christendom, Church affairs were very much under the control of lay powers. This control was carried to an extreme in the time of Charle-

magne. During the next two centuries when the whole of western Europe fell, to a great extent, under the tyranny and domination of Feudalism, the nobles of Rome elected Popes pretty much as they liked. Thus Marozia a Roman woman of noble birth ruled the affairs of Rome for about four years, and in 928 she made her own illegitimate son Pope by deposing Pope John X. Her grandson John XII also became Pope and crowned Otto I as Emperor.

For some time the Emperors and the Popes worked together. The whole situation took a new turn when Pope John XII turned to Otto I for protection against the enemies of Papacy in Italy, just as Pippin had been once persuaded to rescue Papacy from the hands of the Lombards. For the time being the early rulers of the Holy Roman Empire controlled the appointment of the Pope so that they might appoint the clergymen of Germany as their chief agents in crushing the revolts of the nobles. The Emperor Henry III of the Franconian line nominated as many as five successive Popes. But the Church, being God's agent and trustee for the management of human affairs on earth, could not long remain content with this position.

During the tenth century the Christian Church was in a deplorable condition. Not only the Bishops but the lower clergy also were morally debased, corrupt and ignorant. Many of them were illiterate and deceived the people with spells and incantations. Yet, it was at this time that a movement originated in a Benedictine monastery at Cluny, in Burgundy, for the renewal of Christian faith and for reforms in the Church. From Cluny monks went out all over western Europe, preaching the gospel among the people and enforcing the highest standard of morality and discipline upon the clergy. Gradually the influence of the Cluniac movement increased and its branch houses were established all over Europe.

The great aim of the Cluniac movement was to purify the Church, to free it from lay control, as that of the German Kings and Italian nobles, and to establish the Pope as the supreme authority over all ecclesiastics. By the eleventh century these ideals of the Cluniac monks were widely understood and a church synod issued a Decree that the Pope was to be chosen by the college of cardinals. This practice has remained in force to the present day. The Emperors like Otto III and Henry III were great sympathisers of the Cluniac movement, without realizing that it was to bring conflict between the Empire and the Papacy. The conflict only waited an opportunity; and the opportunity came, after the death of Henry III, when the Cluniac monk Hildebrand became Pope under the title Gregory VII.

Hildebrand held that the Pope, who was God's representative on earth, was superior to the Emperor and that the Church was the supreme institution from which the kings and princes of the world received their power. They were, so to say, the vassals of the Pope and must owe allegiance to him. He also said that the bishops and abbots, as vassals of the Church, should get their appointments only from the Pope, and never from a temporal lord. The claims of Hildebrand struck at the root of all royal and baronial authority. Abbots and bishops, as the heads of monasteries and churches, held vast estates for which they owed feudal allegiance. By claiming that the holder of ecclesiastical land owed no homage to any secular person, and that he did not have to receive the investiture of his land from any layman, Hildebrand meant to do away with royal authority altogether and 'to charge the whole Imperial System of Government'.

When Hildebrand formally declared that Church officials were not to receive their investiture from laymen, the

Emperor Henry IV and the German bishops gathered in council and denied Hildebrand as their Pope. In retaliation Hildebrand excommunicated and deposed the Emperor.\* This sentence cast Henry IV out of the Church and was very effective. It encouraged many Germans, particularly the Saxons, to revolt against Henry, and his kingdom was about to go to pieces. At last he was compelled to submit to the Pope. He crossed the Alps with great difficulty in the depth of winter and appeared at the fortress of Canossa where Hildebrand was resting. The Emperor was kept waiting barefoot in the snow for three days. On the fourth day the Pope admitted the Emperor to his presence, and the excommunication was lifted. Henry IV afterwards revenged himself for his humiliation. He led an army into Italy, besieged Rome and set up another Pope of his own. Hildebrand took shelter with the Normans who had set up a kingdom in the south of Italy and died in their midst. His last words were 'I have loved justice and hated inequity and therefore I die in exile'.

The investiture contest was settled only after the death of Gregory VII and Henry IV. Their successors carried on the struggle until 1122. In that year, an agreement known as the *Concordat of Worms* was reached. The right of the Church to select bishops and abbots and to invest them with the ring and the staff, the emblems of their spiritual office, was recognized. But, on the other hand, the elections were to be held in Germany, at least before the presence of the Emperor or his representative who would then invest the newly elected prelate with his fief by a touch of the sceptre.

The settlement of the investiture quarrel did not settle the question of supremacy between the Pope and the

\* 'I absolve all Christians from the oaths which they have sworn or may swear to him, and forbid all allegiance to him'.

Emperor. Three years after the Concordat of Worms, two German families contended for the throne, the Guelfs and the Hohenstaufens. In order to strengthen their party the Guelfs turned to the Papacy as an ally. But the Hohenstaufens remained bitter opponents of the Church. The struggle between the two families continued until the Emperor Frederick I, commonly known as Frederick Barbarossa, the most noted member of the House of Hohenstaufen, came to the German throne. Like Charlemagne and Otto the Great, Frederick wanted to restore the old Roman Empire to its former glory; and he started on his career with the idea that the Emperor held his authority from God alone, and so must be the indisputable head of all Christendom. This naturally involved a struggle with the Hildebrandine ideals of the Papacy. But this time the struggle was not concerned, as in the investiture dispute, with spiritual but with temporal questions. Frederick determined to extend his power over Italy to destroy the two powers that threatened the German empire—the Papacy and the spirit of Italian nationalism and the challenge of the Emperor was taken up by Pope Alexander III.

On the side of Alexander was the full support of the great monastic orders and of the city republics of northern and the Normans of southern Italy. In order to foment disloyalty the Pope excommunicated the Emperor. Frederick then besieged Rome with a large army. But in the hour of victory a great pestilence broke out and he was forced to withdraw. Some years later, the Emperor again led an army into Lombardy. The Lombard cities united under the leadership of Milan and won from him a decisive victory at Legnano.

Due to the scourge of pestilence and his defeat Frederick learnt a lesson and saw that he had been in the

wrong. He now gave way. For the second time an Emperor threw himself at the feet of a Pope and sought peace. Alexander who was unmistakably the victor was great enough to make an honourable reconciliation with the Emperor. Shortly afterwards Frederick Barbarossa died in the Crusades.

### THE TRIUMPH OF PAPACY

With Pope Innocent III (1129-1216), the Papacy reached the height of its power at the beginning of the thirteenth century. In 1208, he, as the censor of the morals of kings and their subjects, ordered the French king Philip Augustus to take back his wife whom he had put away on some pretext. When Philip refused to do so, the Pope laid France under an interdict, that is, an order which closed all churches and suspended all religious activities in the territory. Philip was ultimately compelled to yield to the Pope's decision. Pope Innocent also forced, as has been already stated, King John of England to accept Stephen Langton as the Archbishop of Canterbury by using the Papal weapons of interdict and excommunication.

In Germany, there was terrible disorder after the death of Frederick Barbarossa and Pope Innocent III was asked to intervene. The Pope exhibited his power by securing the crown for Frederick II, the young grandson of Frederick Barbarossa. But the young emperor, after Innocent's death, proved to be a most dangerous enemy to the Papacy. Like his grandfather, Frederick II also asserted that the Imperial power was derived from God Himself, and as such, the Emperor had authority over the State as well as the Church. The real cause of his struggle with the Pope, however, was political. Frederick wanted to become the sole master of



Sicily and Sardinia, so that by joining these two islands with Germany he might control all Italy also. But Pope Innocent IV vowed never to allow Frederick II or his 'viper

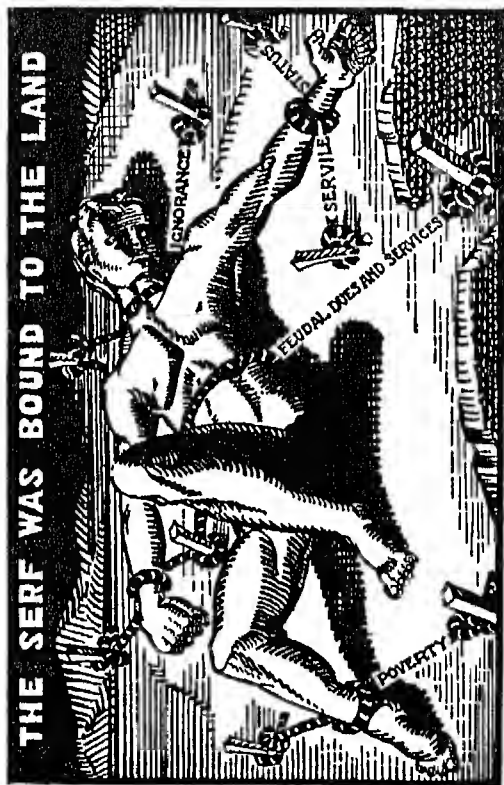



FIG. 22.

brood' to fulfil this scheme. So, the long reign of Frederick was mostly spent in wars against the Lombard cities and the Popes who excommunicated him more than once.

With the death of Frederick II the Holy Roman Empire really ceased to exist,\* and with the death of his son ended the House of Hohenstaufen and the great age of the Empire and the Papacy. Then followed a period of twenty years, called the Great Interregnum, during which time the position of the emperor remained unfilled. During this period of confusion 'first law', as the Germans called it, ruled Germany. At length, through the intervention of the Pope Gregory X, Rudolf of Hapsburg, the founder of the great Austrian dynasty, was elected Emperor. With his accession began a new era in the history of the Empire. The attempt to realize the Imperial idea of a world-state and a world-church had failed. Rudolf gave up all claims to Italy. Nor could he have very much power in Germany which remained a patchwork of numerous small feudal states until the nineteenth century (1891). Italy, also, remained disunited—the cities of the north were independent, and the French with whom the Papacy had allied itself got a strong foothold in the south. It may be said that the real victor of the struggle was the Papacy. It crushed the Empire and prevented the Union of Italy and Germany and vindicated its right to temporal as well as to spiritual supremacy. It could send its legates to every European court and issue laws binding on all western Christendom.

From the beginning of the fourteenth century the political power of the Papacy began to decline. This was due to various reasons. In the first place, people had begun to lose faith in the divine authority of the Church because of the worldliness of the clergy, their greed for money, and their ambitions. Secondly, under the shadow of the Empire

\* The name, however, survived till 1806, when the Austrian ruler Francis II laid down the imperial crown and gave up the title of 'Holy Roman Empire'.



and the Papacy the national states of Europe were developing. In France and England particularly the rulers denied the right of the Pope to meddle in their governmental affairs. Thus Philip the Fair of France, disregarding the bull issued by Pope Boniface, taxed the French clergy and made them pay their feudal dues. Boniface, in anger, wanted to excommunicate Philip; but the King with the help of his nobles, clergy and the 'third estate' declared that the French King was a subject of God alone. Upon the death of Boniface, Philip was able to have a French bishop selected as Pope. The new Pope removed the Papal court to Avignon close to the French border. For over seventy years, a period known in Church history as the 'Babylonian Captivity'\* the Popes lived at Avignon and they were all Frenchmen. They were, therefore, naturally disliked by the English, who were at war with the French throughout most of this period. In 1366, the English Parliament under Edward III refused to pay the tribute pledged by King John and denied English vassalage to Rome. Meanwhile the electors in Germany declared that the German Emperor elected by them derived his power from God through them, and not through the Pope. In the third place, though the Papacy was after the expiry of the 'Babylonian Captivity' restored to Italy there soon broke out religious discord—the Great Schism, as it is called—during which time no single individual was recognized as Pope by the whole of western Europe. Sometimes, there were as many as three 'phantom Popes' each claiming to be the true successor of St. Peter. The Council of Constance (1418) ended this situation by deposing all three Popes and inducing them to submit to the authority of the new Pope Martin V. But in spite of this settlement the political authority of the Pope

\* Recalling the exile of the Jews from their native land.

had already been seriously injured, though his spiritual authority remained intact and is acknowledged even today by almost half the people who bear the name of Christians.

## CHAPTER XXV

### THE CRUSADES

In the middle of the eleventh century A.D., two important events destined to affect the relationship between the East and the West attract our attention. First, in Europe the religious revival called the Cluniac movement greatly increased the popularity of Christianity and, with it, the power and prestige of the Pope of Rome. The people of Europe became more religious than before, and more and more of them longed to see the Holy Land. This encouraged the Pope to launch a counter-movement for the spread of Christianity in Asia as an answer to the threat which Islam had been making in Europe. Second, on the Asiatic side, there was a revival of Muslim power under the Seljuks who not only occupied Jerusalem but were continuously pressing westward and northward against the Byzantine Empire. A renewed clash between expanding Christianity and invigorated Islam seemed, therefore, inevitable.

It started with the expeditions undertaken by the Christians (from 1096-1291 A.D.) for the purpose of rescuing the Holy Land from the Muslims. The expeditions are called the Crusades or Wars of the Cross. The men who went on Crusades—the Crusaders—had to wear crosses on their clothes as a sign that they were soldiers of Jesus Christ. The Crusades produced far-reaching effects on civilization.

#### FIRST CRUSADE (1096-1099 A.D.)

The Arabs occupied Jerusalem in the seventh century A.D. They, however, treated the Christian holy places with

respect and did not molest the Christian pilgrims beyond levying the usual tolls which travellers always paid in alien countries. But when Jerusalem went under the military domination of the Seljuks the Christian pilgrims began to suffer. In 1071 the Seljuks overran the whole of western Asia after inflicting a severe defeat on the Byzantine power in the battle of Manzikert. After this victory, Constantinople itself was threatened. The Byzantine Emperor Alexius in despair sent an appeal to Pope Urban II, the Head of western Christendom.

Pope Urban II had heard with sorrow and indignation of the sufferings of the Christian pilgrims at Jerusalem, and he readily responded to the appeal of the Byzantine Emperor. At a great meeting at Clermont (1095 A.D.) in France he declared that it was the sacred duty of every true Christian to recover the Holy Sepulchre from the hands of these infidels. To those who would undertake this holy task Urban offered forgiveness of sins and eternal life. Besides religious sentiments, there were other and baser motives which induced Urban to make such a declaration. He hoped thereby to put an end to private warfare among the feudal nobles by finding an outlet for their immense fighting energy against the infidels. He saw, too, an opportunity for thrusting the Byzantine power and Church aside and extending the influence of the Latin Church over the East.

Side by side with the figure of the Pope there were many others and they went about throughout France and Germany describing the sufferings of the Christian pilgrims at the hands of the Turks. The most note-worthy of these men was Peter the Hermit who had been to the Holy Land. While in prayer one day, he believed that he had heard the voice of Christ, which said to him 'Peter, arise! It is time that the holy places should be delivered'. So, barefooted, riding on an ass and bearing a huge cross, Peter travelled

about France and Germany and stirred the masses to wild enthusiasm. Many were impelled by religious fervour—the hope of doing the ‘will of God’; many hoped to gain wealth and fortune in the Holy Land which flowed with milk and honey; and many others—serfs, vagabonds and criminals—sought to escape from their debts and imprisonment. There were others still—merchants of the Italian sea-ports such as those in Venice and Genoa and the Normans of Sicily—who were actuated by the desire for increasing their profitable trade with the East by seizing the Levantine ports.

When Urban II preached the First Crusade, thousands took up the cross, and a motley army was formed comprising princes, nobles and trained knights, as well as peasants, artisans and even women. As it began to take time to prepare for such a distant expedition, the more enthusiastic of the band, like the men under Peter the Hermit, became impatient. They set out on their own account through Germany and Hungary. After great suffering and hardship this unorganized mob, greatly reduced in number, at last arrived at Constantinople. On the way and while at Constantinople they looted and destroyed farmsteads, private houses and even Church properties. The Byzantine Emperor soon became desirous to get rid of them and supplied them with the means to cross over into Asia Minor and also warned them that they should proceed carefully into the enemy’s country. But these impetuous men advanced headlong towards Jerusalem; and the Turkish army made short work of them. Peter the Hermit, however, escaped with some of his followers.

The main armies of the Crusaders organized in France, Normandy and Germany landed in Asia Minor about a year afterwards. The first place to be attacked and occupied by them was Nicaea. Then, they appeared before Antioch,

the most important city in Syria. The city held out for eight long months until its gates were opened by a traitor and the Crusaders rushed in. Ten thousands of its inhabitants were slaughtered in one day. Meanwhile many of the Crusaders died of famine and plague which broke out in their camps. Still they began to march forward towards Jerusalem, defying alike the draught and the rain as well as the attacks of the enemy on all sides. At last the towers of Jerusalem came in sight and tears flowed from their eyes. On July 16, 1099, the Holy City was taken by storm with a frightful slaughter of the Moslems. In some places the Christians are said to have waded in blood before they knelt beside the Holy Grave to pray.

The Crusaders were now to settle who was to rule over the country they had conquered. A quarrel arose and the majority of them returned home. Then according to feudal ideas the newly won territory was divided into four Latin (that is, Catholic) baronies, with Godfrey, Baron of Jerusalem as their Leader. Godfrey refused to wear the crown of gold in a land where Jesus Christ had to wear a crown of thorns. For the defence of the Holy Land new religious orders were founded, the chief of them being the orders of the Knights of the Temple and the Knights of the Hospital of St. John of Jerusalem. These men practised the asceticism of monks, but at the same time they took the vows of Knights. They may be called soldier-monks. The two orders developed rapidly and became enormously rich through business and trade.

But the little Latin Kingdom of Godfrey could not long remain in tact. The barons became ambitious and jealous of one another, and the various Moslem states of Asia Minor and Syria began to reunite under the leadership of the just and wise ruler Nur-ed-din. It often happened that the Crusaders made alliances with the Moslems against



other Crusaders. Nay, more; by coming in contact with the superior Arab civilization the Crusaders lost much of their Christian zeal and many of them accepted the faith of Islam.

Between the years 1144 and 1291 when Christian cities, one after another, fell into the hands of the Moslems, there were eight more Crusades. The story of all is one of monotonous failure except that of the Third and the Fourth Crusades.

### THE THIRD CRUSADE

Salaheddin or Saladin the most distinguished of the Moslem rulers of the period had a truce with the Crusaders, but they broke the truce more than once. Enraged at their faithlessness Saladin attacked the Christians and recaptured Jerusalem in 1187. This led to the Third and the most famous of all the military expeditions to the Holy Land. All the great kings of Europe took part in the Third Crusade—the Emperor Frederick Barbarossa, Philip II of France and Richard the Lion-Heart (Richard I) of England. Frederick was nearly seventy years of age, but he was the first to set out for the Holy Land. Overcoming all difficulties on the way he crossed the Bosphorous, and just as he reached the borders of the Holy Land he was drowned while crossing a mountain stream in Asia Minor. The French and English armies proceeded by sea to Palestine capturing Cyprus on the way. Then they landed in Acre. Meanwhile Richard by his arrogance made himself an impossible colleague for Philip. The two kings soon fell out and Philip withdrew, followed by most of the French Crusaders. Richard performed many deeds of valour, but he failed to capture Jerusalem. Ultimately after making a peace with Saladin by which the Christians were to be allowed to visit Jerusalem freely without molestation Richard turned home-

wards. On his way he was kept in prison by Leopold of Austria until he had paid a heavy ransom. The net result of the Third Crusade was that the national rivalries between France, England and Germany became greater than before.

#### THE FOURTH CRUSADE (1202-1204 A.D.)

The events of the Third Crusade showed that the religious enthusiasm of the rulers of Europe to recover the Holy Land was dying out. Pope Innocent III was determined to revive the crusading spirit. He believed that the recovery of the Holy Sepulchre under papal auspices would certainly increase the influence and prestige of the Church. So he launched a Fourth Crusade with the object of first striking at the Moslem power in Egypt.

There was but little response to the call of Innocent III except from some nobles and knights of France and the wealthy merchants of Venice. But the Venetian merchants did not wish to quarrel with Egypt lest their profitable trade with that country should suffer. On the other hand they turned against Constantinople which refused to give them all the commercial privileges they wanted. As a preliminary, they sacked the city of Zara, a rival commercial port on the Adriatic, belonging to Christian Hungary. Pope Innocent protested and excommunicated both the Venetians and the Crusaders, but this had little effect upon them.

The Fourth Crusade now became openly an expedition against the Byzantine empire, rather than a religious war against the Turks. Innocent III continued his vehement protest that the Crusades should not be undertaken against Christian people. In 1204 A.D. however the Venetians and their crusading allies occupied the city of Constantinople. Then followed a barbaric massacre which remains one of

the blackest chapters in European history. At first Pope Innocent was furious when he heard how even 'the virgins were delivered to the ignominious brutality of the soldiery', but his rage calmed down when he saw the prospect of a union of the Eastern and Western Churches.

As a result of the Fourth Crusade a Latin Empire of Constantinople was established and the Venetians gained undisputed commercial control over the coasts of Greece and in the adjoining islands. But the Latin Empire was short-lived. In 1261 A.D. the Greek dynasty was restored in Constantinople, and the separation between the Latin and Greek Church became wider than before. It may be added that the Fourth Crusade indirectly made the advance of the Turks easier, for the Greek Emperors, when they were restored, could never recover their lost power and glory.

After the Fourth Crusade several more attempts were made to recover Jerusalem from the Turks. Of these attempts the most curious and pathetic was the Children's Crusade. It was preached by a French boy who collected a large number of children, many under twelve years of age, to reconquer the Holy Land by their innocence. Many of them died on the way, many were sold by Venetian and Genoese merchants into slavery in Africa and some were induced by the Pope to go home and fulfil their vows when they grew up.

The crusading spirit began to die out in the latter part of the thirteenth century when the people of Europe had other more important things to do than to die upon 'the folly and fanaticism' of religion. Reason was awakening and the enjoyment of the present world began to be regarded more important than that of the future. Those who had an implicit faith in the creed of the Roman Church could satisfy themselves by fighting the heretics near their homes. Then, again, political interests were engaging the

minds of kings who had to collect all their forces for joining the internecine struggles at home. There was, therefore, no surplus energy to be spent in enterprises that took one far afield.

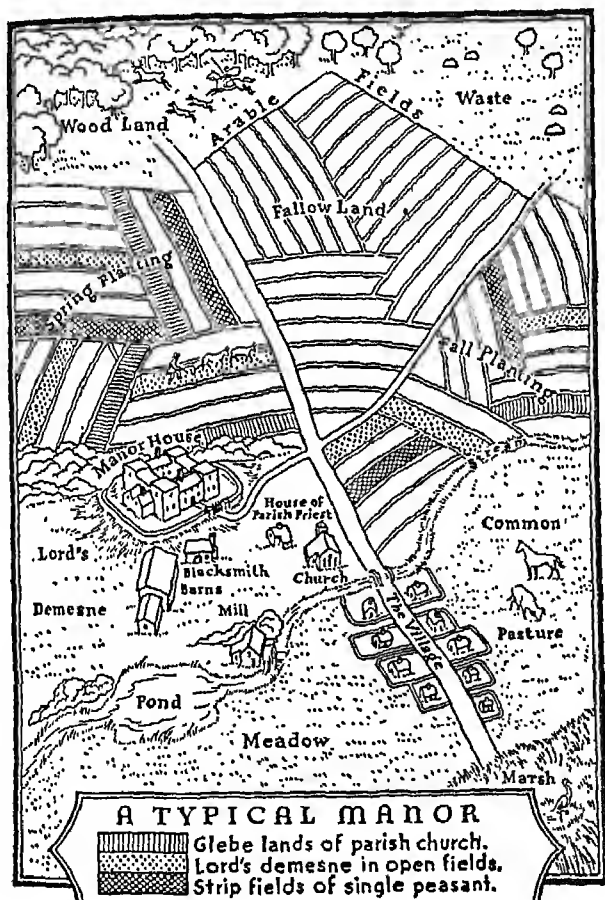


FIG. 23.

## RESULTS OF THE CRUSADES

The Crusades failed in their immediate object, namely, the recovery of the Holy Land, but they altered the life of the people of Europe in many respects. The English and French monarchs gained in power by getting rid of the turbulent barons who plunged into the Crusades and the majority of whom never returned. In order to find money for the journey these barons sold their feudal control over many towns. Thus Feudalism declined, and towns grew up whose citizens bought their freedom by deeds called Charters, which stated that they had the right to manage their own affairs. This marks the beginning of modern municipal government.

The cities of Italy had gained tremendous commercial advantages and from this time dated the mercantile greatness of Venice and Genoa. Thus, the trade between the East and the West which had declined after the break-up of the Roman Empire was again established, and eastern commodities, such as fruits, spices and materials came into Europe.

At first the Crusades increased the power of the Roman Pope because it was under his auspices that the different peoples of Europe were brought together with a sense of religious unity. But the growth of national consciousness and the heavy taxes which the Pope imposed upon the people roused strong opposition to Papal autocracy. The capture and sack of Constantinople by the Crusaders in the Fourth Crusade and the establishment of a Latin Kingdom in Constantinople led to bitter hostility between eastern and western Christendom. This facilitated the capture of Constantinople by the Turks.

It may be said however that the Crusades acted as a sort of liberal education for the people of Europe. Their

outlook was widened in many respects. The Crusades developed a tone of adventure and a curiosity about the East which, in later years, led to the penetration of Asia

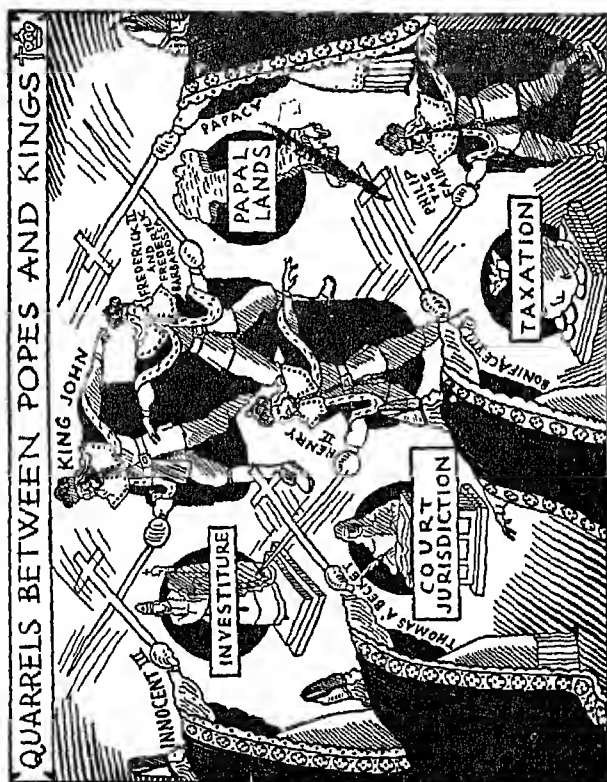


FIG. 24.

and the maritime discoveries of Columbus, Vasco da Gama, Drake and others. The people of Europe came in contact with a civilization higher than their own, and acquired new habits of dress and manners. Their prejudices were

dispelled by the cultured Moslems who taught them Greek science and philosophy in Arabic translations. 'A new tolerance, a new scepticism, a new eclecticism, resulted from this intermingling of East and West'.\*

\* Hearnshaw—*Medieval Contribution to Modern Civilization*, p. 36.

## CHAPTER XXVI

### MEDIEVAL TOWNS AND UNIVERSITIES IN EUROPE

#### REVIVAL OF TOWNS

There were numerous prosperous towns in the Roman Empire, for the Romans were great lovers of urban life. But the prosperity of the Roman towns had begun to decline because of the heavy taxes levied upon them to ward off the barbarians. The barbarians detested cities and liked villages. So as a result of their invasions the whole of central and western Europe was reduced to an agricultural level of society with small self-sufficing village communities.

After the successive waves of barbarian invasions had passed over Europe, the conditions of society again became settled. This encouraged the development of industry and trade and, with it, the revival of old towns which had been ruined and neglected, as well as the growth of new towns on favourable spots, either on steep hills or on the banks of navigable rivers.

#### LIFE IN MEDIEVAL TOWNS

The town at first was subject to the control of the king or the lord on whose land it stood. He burdened it with taxes and realized other feudal dues according to custom or his necessity. From the eleventh century onward every town in Europe tried to make bargains with its lord, so that in the course of time many towns had privileges by which they could pass their own laws, appoint their own



officials, collect their own taxes and even use their own money. The number of such towns increased especially during the days of the Crusades when kings and lords wanted money which was supplied by rich traders and merchants, in return for fresh charters of rights and privileges. Thus the towns became places of freedom. In some parts of Europe it became the law that if a serf could escape and live in a chartered town for 'a year and a day' he was to be free thereafter.

With a few exceptions, all the medieval towns were small and crowded. The houses were built closely together, and the streets were narrow. The upper stories of the houses would often project far beyond the streets so that from opposite top windows people could shake hands. There was little or nothing of the comforts and conveniences which are associated with city life today. Sanitation was unknown and pollution of drinking water caused frequent epidemics. There was no system of street lighting except that lanterns hung before inns. After dark the town gates were closed and honest people remained at home for safety.

Nevertheless, towns had many attractions for the people of the manor. There were fairs where merchants from different countries would expose their merchandise for sale. There were jugglers and clowns to amuse the people in return for coppers. Spectators would assemble to see dog-fights and cock-fights. Besides, towns afforded greater opportunities for advancement. In those days of a fixed and rigid class system nobody could be a noble except by birth. But there were two spheres wherein even a man of humble birth could advance. One was the Church, and the other was the city. The poor boy of ability and ambition who did not wish to become a priest or a monk might go to the town and become a rich merchant or an elderman, a burgomaster or a mayor of the city.

One of the most important results of the development of towns was the rise of the Third Estate—the middle class—which naturally caused a decline in the importance of nobles and clergymen. This Third Estate was comprised of wealthy merchants and lawyers who, under royal patronage, assumed elevated positions in political and social life. They supported a strong central government, lost the dread of the Church and began to ridicule the ideals of the clergy.

### THE GUILD SYSTEM

The activities of town life were very different to those of the feudal manorial life. Most of the townsmen were engaged in one way or another in some trade. The trade was controlled by associations or mutual welfare societies called *guilds*. In some respects guilds resembled our modern trade unions; but unlike union men, guild members were owners of shops as well as workers—there was no sharp division between the capitalist and the worker. The guilds were very useful institutions, protecting those members who had fallen into poverty, rescuing those who had been imprisoned, and sometimes giving a funeral to a member who had died and giving a pension to the widow. Another object of the guilds was to obtain monopolies of trade so that foreign merchants could not sell or buy anything without previous permission. The guilds could also fix the laws of apprenticeship and punish shopkeepers for selling inferior goods or working on Sundays and holidays. The guild-institution reached the height of its power in the thirteenth century. It had its officers and time and place of meeting, and was in many instances powerful enough to control the town government. From the thirteenth to the fifteenth century the townsmen were great financial powers controlling the policies of emperors and kings. Many

German cities had not only their own rulers and laws, but they made a league among themselves. One such league became particularly famous. It is known as the Hanseatic League. Most of its members were from German towns—Lubeck, Hamburg, Bremen and Danzig, but it had agents throughout Europe. It maintained a strong fleet by which it drove the pirates from the North Sea and the Baltic and forced even kings to stop interfering with its trade and trading ports in countries as far away as England and Norway.

### MEDIEVAL ITALIAN CITIES

Besides the cities of the Hanseatic League there were even greater and more prosperous cities in Italy which were strong enough to throw off even formal allegiance to the Empire and to become completely independent. Among these we may mention three—Milan, Florence and Venice.

Milan was the chief city of Lombardy. It produced the first steel armour and the most beautiful cloths of wool and silk in all western Europe. The city became particularly famous for its Cathedral—a most elaborate example of Gothic architecture and one of the largest churches in Europe.

The political history of Milan is tragic. It once boldly headed the resistance of the Lombard towns against the Holy Roman Emperors. But it soon fell a prey to the despotism of two rival houses. In the sixteenth century Milan lost its independence and became a possession of Spain, and in the 18th century it went to Austria.

Florence was one of the most beautiful cities of the world and produced more famous works of art than any other city except Athens. It produced beautiful cloths, and gold coins, called *florins* which were accepted in every country in

Europe. The city also advanced towards democracy more than any other city of those times. But it soon fell a prey, like Milan, to party politics and rebellion, and violent changes of constitution followed in quick succession.

What finally destroyed the republic of Florence was the rich family of Medici. They were clever enough to keep the republic in form but they actually ruled as despots. They pleased the people by spending money for public works and for works of art in their own homes. There was, however, one man who did not like the Medici. He was Savonarola, who was ultimately put to death for heresy and treason, and the Medici became the hereditary rulers of Florence with the title of Duke (later Grand Duke) of Tuscany. In the eighteenth century Florence became a part of the possessions of the Hapsburgs of Austria and in the nineteenth century it joined United Italy.

Venice was in those days the eastern gate of Italy. The Venetians built a great fleet and occupied some islands of the Mediterranean as well as the territory along the shores of the Adriatic. The Eastern Roman Empire, the rival Italian cities like Genoa, and, in later times, the Turks, all tried to conquer this wealthy city and its empire. But Venice held out against all attacks. It was not until the time of Napoleon Bonaparte at the end of the eighteenth century, that the Venetian Republic was at last conquered.

From Venice merchants went to trade with the Eastern Roman Empire at Constantinople. So the city felt particularly the influence of the East. Its great building, Saint Mark's Cathedral, does not resemble the Great Cathedral of Milan but 'looks like a cross between Santa Sophia in Constantinople and Aladdin's Palace in the Arabian Nights'. The painters of Venice are commonly considered as the greatest masters of the use of colour.

The wealthy merchants of Venice formed the Great

Council. There was a governor or *Doge* elected for life. The Council of Ten watched the constitution. The best days of Venice were over by the sixteenth century when new trade routes were discovered across the Atlantic and around the southern tip of Africa.

### THE GROWTH OF UNIVERSITIES

After the break-up of the Roman Empire and the consequent decline of urban civilization, education became the monopoly of churches and monasteries, so that it was wholly confined to those who wished to enter the Church. But from the later Middle Ages this situation began to give way to new intellectual forces. There was a growing interest of people in theology and Roman law and also in the new knowledge of mathematics, medicine and surgery which were introduced by the Arabs. For the satisfaction of this interest people had to get out of the bonds of cathedral schools and create what we call a 'University'.

The universities began to be organized from the twelfth century A.D. They were really *guilds* or a corporation of students who made their own rules and hired their teachers, as at Bologna. Others were guilds of teachers as at Paris. The teachers supported themselves by fees from the students. Text books were scarce and expensive as there was no printing press.

The chief study of the Middle Ages was theology, or that branch of thought which attempts to investigate the nature of God and the relationship of man to God. The great authority and source of information for medieval theologians was the Bible and the writings of the early Church Fathers such as the works of Augustine and, somewhat later, the works of Aristotle. Out of these materials, the scholars of the Middle Ages sought to create a universal

philosophy which would fortify Christian doctrine by means of logic, and deduce all knowledge from the Bible and early Christian writers without taking the help of independent thought and observation. This philosophy was known as scholasticism and the men who created it were called scholastics. Scholasticism was a special study in the University of Paris. Similarly the University of Bologna became a centre for the study of Roman Law and the University of Salerno taught the Greek and Arabic sources of medical and surgical knowledge.

The students of the universities came from different nations. There were students, of course, who spent ascetic and industrious lives and made valuable contributions to the advancement of learning. But like youths of all ages, they often engaged in fights among themselves and with the citizens of the town. They were impatient of authority. Sometimes they would discuss heretical topics even though such topics were barred from discussion. The parody of Gospel and composition of poems on women, drinking and fighting were their frequent amusements. The universities provided opportunities for the free play of a care-free inquiring mind which sought to base its conclusion on observation and experiment rather than on the authority of the Bible.

## CHAPTER XXVII

### THE OTTOMAN TURKS AND THE BYZANTINE EMPIRE

We have seen how the Arabs conquered the Berbers of North Africa, and the combined forces of the Berbers and Arabs, henceforth known as the Moors crossed the Straits of Gibraltar (711 A.D.) and rapidly overran Spain and advanced up to the banks of the Loire. Though their advance was checked by Charles Martel in the battle of Tours, the Moslem threat to Europe from the south-western side was by no means over. The victory at Tours saved France from Moslem domination ; but the Moors continued to rule in Spain where they had established a Caliphate at Cordova, until they were finally expelled from their last foothold in Granada in 1492.

While the Moors were ruling in Spain, south-eastern Europe was being threatened by the Abbasids of Damascus and Baghdad and then by the Seljuk Sultans. During the eleventh and twelfth centuries the Seljuks built up a great empire in Asia Minor and the Middle East. But after the Crusades this Empire was broken into a number of separate principalities ruled by *Emirs* or local lieutenants of the Seljuk Turks. One of these Emirs was Er. Toghrul, who as the leader of a fresh group of Turks, settled in Asia Minor in the latter part of the thirteenth century. When Er. Toghrul died (1288) he was succeeded by his energetic son Othman who gave his name to the whole group as the Othmanli, Osmanli or Ottomans.

Othman began a much more ambitious career than that of his father. He had at his command a well-organized

army, and with its help he extended his territory northward at the expense of the Byzantine Empire in Asia Minor or modern Anatolia. As the Byzantine Empire was inhabited chiefly by Christians it has sometimes been inferred that the motive of Othman in attacking that empire was chiefly religious, namely, to extend the Moslem creed in non-Moslem lands. But it seems more likely that Othman advanced northward because he found the Christians of that side bitterly divided among themselves and an easy wealthy prey. At any rate Othman's conquest was in the form of a gradual assimilation of the Greeks, Slavs and other races within one government which, judging by the standard of that time, meted out equal justice to all, irrespective of race and religion.\*

The immediate successors of Othman were, like him, valiant warriors and capable leaders. During their reigns the Ottoman Turks slowly but surely pursued a policy of extending their territory in all directions. By the middle of the fourteenth-century they undid the work of the Crusaders by bringing the whole of Asia Minor under their sway, captured one city after another—Ephesus, Brusa, Nicaea and Nicomedia, and were able to dictate to the Byzantine emperors. Then the Ottomans became ready to begin their struggle for the mastery of Europe.

#### THE TURKS AND THE BYZANTINE EMPIRE

The position of the Byzantine Empire at that time was not at all secure. The Serbs who had overrun the Balkans as early as the sixth century A.D. were now under their great leader Stephen Dushan, and they subjected Macedonia, Albania and Thessaly, threatened Salonika and even Constantinople. The Bulgars, a mixture of Slavs and Finno-

\* Lord Eversley—*The Turkish Empire*, p. 3.



Mongolians, threw off the Byzantine yoke, while the Genoese and Venetians disputed with the Greeks for the control of south-eastern Europe and the Aegean islands. Thus the Byzantine Emperors in Constantinople found themselves confronted on all sides by foreign foes—Turks, Slavs and Italians. In addition there were recurring quarrels of the reigning dynasty over the imperial succession, which weakened the Empire all the more.

While the condition of the empire was thus going from bad to worse, the Greeks themselves gave the Turks the opportunity to intervene in Europe. Cantacuzenus, the mayor of the palace, appealed to Orkhan, son of Othman, for assistance to supplant the minor Emperor John Palaeologus, and gave his daughter Theodora in marriage to the Ottoman prince. Orkhan sent his son Suleiman to help Cantacuzenus. Suleiman crushed Cantacuzenus's enemies, and laid the foundation of the Ottoman Empire in Europe by making the first Turkish settlement in Gallipoli in 1355. The Byzantine Empire, though still maintaining its existence in Constantinople was virtually reduced to vassalage of the Turkish Sultan.

In the latter part of the fourteenth century Murad I, the son and successor of Orkhan, declared war against the Byzantine Emperor, conquered Adrianople and made it his capital replacing Brusa. From this time Adrianople was used by the Turks as a new base for further advances north and west. Murad also defeated the combined army of Serbs, Hungarians, Walachians and Moldavians at the battle of Kossova (1389) in which the Serbian King Lazanes was killed. Shortly after this battle the Ottoman king was assassinated by a Serb while he was reviewing his victorious troops.

Before his death Murad so much increased his prestige with the Christian kings of south-eastern Europe that the

Byzantine Emperor gave one of his daughters in marriage to Murad himself and the other two to his sons. From that time there had been frequent relations between Ottoman Sultans and the Byzantine Emperors, and the result may be summed up thus: 'The Turks had been involved in the family and dynastic quarrels of the Imperial city, were bound by ties of blood to the ruling families, frequently supplied troops for the defence of Constantinople. Yet the Ottomans never ceased to annex Imperial territories and cities both in Asia and Thrace. This curious intercourse between the House of Othman and the Imperial government had a profound effect on both institutions; the Greeks grew more and more debased and demoralized by the shifts and tricks that their military weakness obliged them to adopt towards their neighbours, the Turks were corrupted by the alien atmosphere of intrigue and treachery which crept into their domestic life. Fratricide and patricide, the two crimes which most frequently stained the annals of the Imperial Palace, eventually formed a part of the policy of the Ottoman dynasty'.\* Another important service of Murad was the perfection of the organization of the famous Janissaries. The Janissaries were first instituted during the reign of Orkhan. They were a corps recruited from Christian subjects. The conquered Serbs, Bulgars and Albanians were compelled to supply a thousand boys a year between the ages of ten and twelve. These boys were converted to Muhammedanism, and they grew up with no knowledge of their family or memory of the religion of their fathers. Thus was produced the extraordinary fighting machine known as the Janissaries. The discipline of this corps was very severe and it became the most efficient and reliable body of troops in the Ottoman army. In later years,

\* Mark Sykes—*The Caliph's Last Heritage*.

during the reign of degenerate Sultans the number of the Janissaries was increased and it became a danger to the state like the Praetorian Guard of Imperial Rome. It was also a great menace to eastern Europe for the next three centuries.

By the end of the fourteenth century the Ottomans extended east to Siraz and entirely dominated the Balkan peninsula except Constantinople where also they made and unmade emperors and extracted heavy tribute. There was at that time an energetic king in Hungary. His name was Sigismund. Being afraid of the threat to his territory by the Turkish occupation of the Bulgarian Danube towns and the impending fall of Constantinople now besieged by Bayezid, Sigismund appealed to all Christian kings for assistance. He was backed by the Pope of Rome who preached another Crusade against the infidels. A large army proceeded along the Danube to Nicopolis pillaging and slaying as it proceeded. It has been said that the Christian knights were so sure of victory that they brought with them their mistresses and other appurtenances of luxury. The two opposing armies met four miles south of Nicopolis, and the Christians were completely defeated by the Turks. Bayezid was determined to overrun Germany and Italy, and sent an ultimatum to the Byzantine Emperor to leave Constantinople. But he had to give up his plans because he heard the alarming news of the invasion of his territory from the east by Timur the Lame. In the great battle of Angora the army of Bayezid was annihilated and he himself died as a captive of the great Mongol invader.

For the time being the Ottoman Empire was on the verge of dissolution. A quarrel broke out in the House of the Sultan, and many of the Emirs in Asia Minor declared their independence. But the Ottomans quickly regained their power, and their advance into Europe did not stop.

In 1444 A.D., Hungary organized a strong army under a great soldier named John Hunyadi to oppose the Turks. The army was composed of Hungarians, Poles, Bulgarians

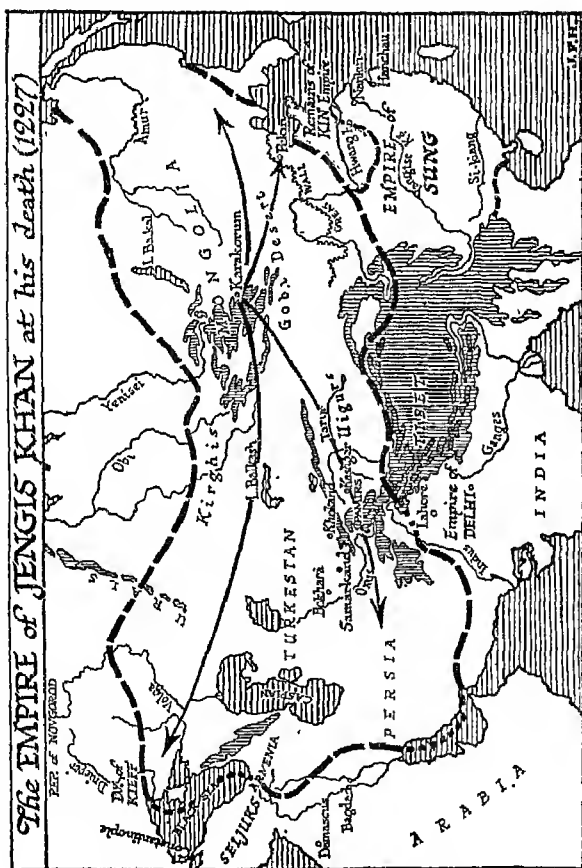


FIG. 25.

and Serbs. It was also aided by the merchants of Genoa, Venice and by the Pope himself. The Turks were forced to sue for peace for the time being. But in the same year they

recovered their former position by a victory over the Christians at Varna, and again four years later at the second battle of Kossovo.

In the fateful year 1453 Muhammad II after elaborate preparation laid siege to Constantinople, the centre of intrigue against Turkish rule. The reigning Byzantine Emperor was unpopular because he could not reunite the eastern and western churches. But with a band of 10,000 men at his command and small detachments sent by the Pope and by the people of Venice and Genoa 'for the glory of God and the safety of Christendom' he was determined to defend the city. For two months the huge army of Muhammad II was kept at bay. In the meantime the walls of the imperial city were continually being bombarded, and the garrison within gradually reduced by death and wounds. Eventually Constantine XI the last of the Graeco-Roman emperors, was forced to give way, and he with all his men perished fighting to the very end.

The fall of Constantinople transformed the traditional empire of the Near East from Greek and Christian hands to hands that were Moslem and Turk. But Muhammad II who was an unusually well-educated man of good intellectual taste placed the city under a Greek patriarch Gennadios who had considerable civil and religious authority over the orthodox Christians throughout the empire. As the city was one of the greatest and strongest cities in the whole world it was soon made the Turkish capital and the centre of Muslim authority in the continents of Europe, Asia and Africa. The great Church of Santa Sophia which Justinian the Great had built was turned into a mosque. The Turks were now to control both Asia Minor and the Balkans for centuries to come.

## CHAPTER XXVIII

### THE RENAISSANCE—THE PASSING OF THE MIDDLE AGES

The term 'Renaissance' may be used in two senses. In the narrower sense it denotes the intellectual movement which led to the revival of interest in, and enthusiasm for, the art and learning of ancient Greece and Rome. Using the term in this sense the Renaissance movement was sometimes considered as beginning from the capture of Constantinople by the Turks in 1453. It is assumed that when the Turkish army got near, the learned men from the colleges and universities of the Byzantine Empire fled to the West taking with them their Greek and Roman manuscripts; and as a result of their teachings the people of Europe who had long forgotten the past suddenly looked back and saw the Golden Age of Pericles and the peace and grandeur of the Roman Empire. But this view setting a definite date for a cultural epoch cannot be justified historically. In fact, Greek and Latin had already been taught in Italy for at least half a century before the fall of Constantinople. The fall of the Byzantine capital only aided and stimulated the revival of classical study in European countries.

In the more general sense the Renaissance indicates all the changes in the life and outlook of the Western nations, by which the transition from that period of history which we call the middle ages to that which we call the modern, is characterized. It includes the revival of learning, but it also includes other phenomena which have little or nothing to do with the recovery of the classics. These are, briefly

speaking, the decay of the influence of ecclesiastical and feudal despotism, the development of nationalities and languages, the development of towns and commerce, and the invention of gunpowder, paper and the printing press, also the geographical discoveries beyond the oceans. Thus, the Renaissance was not a sudden or single event in European history. It was a gradual progressive movement in which many factors combined so that the ideas and ideals of medieval civilization began to lose their hold on the mind of man. It is in this comprehensive sense that the word 'Renaissance' will be considered in this book. The revival of learning will be treated as only a factor in the process of evolution of the Renaissance spirit.

### THE NEW SPIRIT OF ENQUIRY

The two chief institutions which dominated the affairs of the people of Europe in the Middle Ages were the Roman Catholic Church and Feudalism. The European people came to believe that they were of no importance in themselves unless they could save their souls. And all the needs of the soul—baptism, forgiveness of sins, and blessings at death—were taken care of by the Roman Catholic Church. The hold of the Church was further strengthened by the fact that the Church was in those days a great civilizing agency, holding up an ideal of conduct and a conception of European commonwealth, which was of great social and moral value in the midst of the prevailing warfare and rough living. Similarly, Feudalism regulated the political, economic and social life of the people of those days. In the lord's manor they could find protection, a rough form of justice and social welfare, and land to live upon. But from the end of the twelfth century onwards these two medieval institutions felt the influence of new forces and began to be modified by them.

The teaching of the Church had been from the beginning regulated by rigid theological principles. All reasonings and questioning and doubts of the human mind were suppressed by an iron conservatism, with threats and with blows. Such oppression smote with painful sharpness on the thinking mind.

The first forebodings of restlessness and discontent under the Church's unquestioned authority arose in Abelard (1079-1142 A.D.), himself a churchman trained in the University at Paris. Disregarding the injunctions of the Church, Abelard privately married a girl named Heloise and wanted to make logic the basis of teaching theology. He was, of course, condemned for heresy. But other scholars of a similar original turn of mind followed in the foot-steps of Abelard. One of the most notable of them was Roger Bacon. He described the principle of the telescope and made experiments in physics. His work was inconsistent with theological belief and was viewed with alarm by the Church. He was, therefore, accused of witchcraft and thrown into prison for ten years. Human reason, however, could not be suppressed. Later on, many factors combined including the collapse of the Holy Roman Empire and the rise of national states under strong kings, to bring about fundamental changes in man's outlook and widening of his vision. He became critical and imaginative, ready to question things he had not dared question before, and he felt himself free and able to think along new lines with regard to the individual and the world around him.

This new spirit—the spirit of inquiry and adventure beyond the Church's sphere, the development of a new mental attitude, of new ideas and tastes—became most marked in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. It affected the European people in every aspect of their life. *Intellectually* it found its highest work in the strengthening of



individual expressions in art and literature, taking as models the classics of Greece and Rome. This meant a reaction from the 'otherworldliness' of the middle ages to that of the enjoyment of the present world. *Socially*, 'Europe began to be divided vertically instead of, as before, horizontally'.\* Feudalism decayed, entailing the decline of the landed aristocracy and the rigid social distinctions maintained at the expense of the many for the benefit of the few. The growth of cities, the importance of the merchant-class and the freeing of serfs, all helped to develop a new middle class—the bourgeois—based on the possession of wealth and not on nobility of birth. This class acquired all political power in the cities. *Politically*, the Renaissance marked the decline of the Holy Roman Empire believed to have been ordained by God and the rise of strong national kingdoms in England and France. People began to think that government was an artificial product which could be freely criticised. *Ecclesiastically*, the Renaissance undermined the authority of the Church by encouraging the growth of strong national sentiment and scientific criticism of the text of the Bible. The people claimed the right of free thought not only in secular matters but in religious questions as well. In Teutonic lands the Renaissance led to the Protestant Reformation.†

\* Lodge—*Modern Europe*, p. 4.

† 'To exclude the Reformation and the Counter-Reformation wholly from this survey is impossible. These terms indicate moments in the whole process of modern history which were opposed, each to the other, and both to the Renaissance; and it is needful to bear in mind that they have, scientifically speaking, a quite separate existence. Yet, if the history of Europe in the 16th century of our era came to be written with the brevity with which we write the history of Europe in the 6th century B.C., it would be difficult at the distance of time implied by that supposition to distinguish the Italian movement of the Renaissance in its origin from the German movement of the Reformation. Both would be seen to have a common starting-point in the reaction against long dominant ideas which

## REFORMERS BEFORE THE REFORMATION

During the thirteenth century the Papacy, victorious in the long struggle with the Holy Roman Empire, not only exercised absolute supremacy in spiritual matters but it controlled also the policies of the different states of Europe. It even named and deposed emperors in Germany. The large revenues derived from taxes (*tithes* and *annats*) and fines imposed for spiritual offences enabled the Church to meet the expenses of war whenever necessary.

But from the fourteenth century many factors arose which slowly but surely undermined the dominant position of the Church. In the first place there were men who criticised the abuses in the Church and objected to some of the doctrines preached by the clergy. Such men were called 'heretics'. As early as the twelfth and thirteenth centuries two heretical sects—the Waldensians in Italy and the Albigensians in Southern France—called into question the traditional teachings of the Catholic Church, denounced the luxury of the clergy and appealed to the authority of the Bible. Both the sects were fearfully punished and the Albigensians were totally exterminated by the Holy Court of Inquisition. In the fourteenth century another influential heretic, John Wycliffe (1324-1394), an English priest, preached the same things as were done by the Waldensians. He condemned the worldliness of the clergy, questioned the right of the Church to own property, rejected certain Church doctrines and set up the Bible (which he translated into English) as the sole rule of faith. Wycliffe gathered round him a large number of followers who became known as Lollards. John Hus (1373-1415), a Bohemian clergyman, spread Wycliffe's doctrines throughout central Europe, but

were becoming obsolete, and also in the excitation of faculties which had during the same period been accumulating energy'.—*Encyclopaedia Britannica*—'Renaissance'.

Hus was ultimately charged with heresy and burned at the stake.

Another reformer who flourished at the very height of the Renaissance was the puritanical monk Savonarola. He acquired immense influence in Florence as a reformer of morals. As the people listened to him 'their eyes were opened to their danger; they shook with terror; with sobs and wails they followed the preacher wherever he went, hanging on his words as on their only hopes'. Unfortunately Savonarola ultimately assumed the character of a political leader and was executed as a traitor.

#### THE REVIVAL OF LEARNING IN ITALY

For various reasons the Renaissance began earlier in Italy than in the rest of Europe. That was because of her geographical position—always an important factor in historical development. The Italian peninsula, situated at the centre of the highway of trade during the medieval centuries, maintained business relations with Greece, Constantinople and the cities of western Asia, and thus became acquainted with the language and culture of those lands. In the fourteenth century the learning of Greek became a passion and the fashion in Italy. There were also other circumstances which helped Italy to escape the rigidity and narrowness characteristic of medieval Europe. Rome, the centre of Christendom, had long been a meeting place for thousands of pilgrims and crusaders from all parts of Europe. Their ceaseless ebb and flow served to stimulate new ideas and ideals. Besides, the growth of commerce gave wealth, power and freedom to great Italian cities such as Venice, Milan, Genoa and Florence whose inhabitants had sufficient leisure for study, luxury and rivalry among themselves which called upon individual talents and gave ambition free play.

The Renaissance made itself felt in two distinct phases, namely, the revival of classical literature and learning, and the revival of art. The literary phase was the result of the efforts of three remarkable men of Florence—Dante (1265-1321), Petrarch (1304-1374) and Boccaccio (1313-1375). Dante, the greatest of all Italian poets, was the connecting link between the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. His most famous work, *The Divine Comedy*, imagines a journey to the other world to see his lady Beatrice. It is based on medieval as well as classical themes. Dante's descriptions of the hideous tortures in hell and the grand processions in heaven were literally believed by medieval men. At the same time Dante drew much of his inspiration from the Latin poet Virgil and showed a fearless independence of thought and expression. Petrarch, who has been called 'the first modern man', attacked the learning of the medieval universities (scholasticism) and expressed his veneration for the ancient classical authors by writing graceful sonnets in Latin. He made a collection of about two hundred Latin and Greek manuscripts and became a leader of the revival of the study of the classics. It may be said that through Petrarch's influence the Renaissance took form and became a reality. One of Petrarch's disciples was Boccaccio who was the first Italian to master Greek. He wrote a book called *The Decameron*, a collection of a hundred lively short stories, in which he justified the carnal life and introduced a new spirit into literature.

The new interest created by Petrarch and his followers for the study of the classics became known as *humanism*. Those who promoted *humanism* were called *humanists*.\* The humanists tried to restore classical culture and classical

\* The Renaissance scholars were called humanists because they interested themselves in literature that had more to do with man than with divinity.—Tanner, p. 27.

ideals as the best means of developing the highest powers of man. They ridiculed the monks, emphasized the pleasures of this life and opposed the teaching of scholastic philosophy and theology. The humanist ideal was to know everything: literature, poetry, history, art, science—to be a *polyhistor* or universal scholar. This desire for knowledge in so many fields reflects the intellectual restlessness of the men of the Renaissance.

Humanism was greatly patronised by the Platonic Academy at Florence, founded by Casimo de' Medici (1438). From Florence humanism spread through Italy. The movement, it will be recalled, received a great impulse after the fall of Constantinople which caused a migration of many classical scholars to important Italian cities such as Milan, Venice, Naples and Rome. There, as teachers in schools and universities, they taught the people to love everything Greek. The result was that by the end of the fifteenth century even the Popes such as Pius II, Alexander VI and Leo X adopted the fashions of the age and became patrons of the new learning which in the long run was bound to weaken the ideas underlying the authority of the Church itself.

It was inevitable that the new learning should spread beyond the limits of purely literary activity. Enlightened by the renewed study of Plato and Aristotle men were led to make fresh examinations of the political and social conditions of the day and of the art of government. The most famous of such men was a Florentine named Nicholas Machiavelli who, in his book *The Princes*, made a study of politics and diplomacy of the Italian city states of his time. In this study, Machiavelli politely set religion and morality on one side and stated that the ideal ruler would be one who would use any means, fair or foul, to gain his objects—considerations of mercy and principles should

not interfere with statesmanship. The doctrines which Machiavelli formulated have since been widely followed by many nation-states of the world up to the present day.

To conclude: By the beginning of the sixteenth century the type of life called 'medieval' was declining. This decline was brought about by various forces—political consciousness arising out of the growth of strong national states, new economic and social adjustments due to the development of towns and commerce, and new points of view in religious matters grown from a new spirit of enquiry and the revival of the study of classical literature and science. In these forces we find inherent many of the features characteristic of what may be called the 'modern' phase of world history.